

WHERE IS THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN THE NT?: A REVIEW OF VIEWS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Abstract

The question whether to ordain women or not threatens the fabric of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The anti and the pro-ordination argument hinge on scripture, the only source of authority for the Remnant Church. This paper has made a critical observation of the arguments and concludes that neither of the camps is right. The NT seems quiet on the issue of the ordination of women. Because the texts used for or against seem to be read either at an apparent level, or applied without a keen regard to the contexts, this paper suggests a halt on the ordination and gives recommendations for alleviating the tension.

Key words: women, ordination, women, headship.

1. Introduction

The practice of, or the mere prospects to the ordination threatens to crack the fabric of unity in a majority of the Christian denominations.¹ Gordon Wenham underscores the "ordinationist" oversimplification of the matter as trivial and deserving just a policy adjustment and consistent push in order to achieve it by a natural waning of the opponents. Hence to many people, ordination of women is simply a matter of time before the church catches up with the modern thinking. Opposition to women priests, they argue, is just the product of entrenched male

¹Noteworthy is the fact that the Catholic Church, whose decisions may be settled by the authoritative voice of the Pope and the inspiration of the Church Traditions, such issues are relatively less serious and divisive (see Butler, 1). Contrarily, a host of the denominations, including the SDA Church which depend on scriptural and theological rationale, and on the decision on Synods and general meetings of adherents, find it hard to come to consensus and this often causes frictions and fractures. The Presbyterian Church makes a longitudinal trace of the controversy in the church in regard to the subject of women ordination. *Women in the Life of the Church: a Position Paper Approved by the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, (June 2005), 1-2.

prejudice which will gradually melt away once women are given their rightful place in the ordained ministry. This view, I believe, is overly simple. It fails to explain the bitterness of the debate and the divisions it has caused in many churches¹

The Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereafter, SDA Church) is no exception. A close examination of correspondences over traditional and modern media reveals voices that echo and re-echoing the argument that the settlement of the debate on women's ordination is long overdue. Almost the same amount of correspondence air out a contrary perspective, arguing that biblical testimony on role demarcation imply exclusion of women from ordained ministry² and as a result there is a threat of a fracture for a once-considered coherent denomination.³ It may be argued, and obviously true, that the danger of fracture is gigantic given the current world of technology and multiple-connectivity where reactions and counter reactions dot the internet and websites.

Most of the arguments that postulate gender inclusiveness, even in the event of heavily dependence on Scripture, seem to derive from a focus on equalitarianism that feels it a "plot of male

¹Gordon Wenham, "Ordination of Women: Why is it so Divisive," *Churchman*, 92(1978): 310.

²The interesting phenomenon is that this debate seems balanced: almost equal amount of voice from men in each camp; almost equal voices of women from each side; almost equal amount of concern from pastors and distinguished elder from each perspective, and an almost equal amount of voices from pastor from each camp all over the world (See "Correspondences [email and letters] in Support of the Ordination of Women" and compare the comments with those in "Correspondences [email and letters] NOT in Support of the Ordination of Women." Check also on the responses for and against the decision of NAD on the ordination).

³In a case study he made on the schism of the Anglican-Episcopal Church, Raymond Holmes warns the SDA church to draw from the former's experience to avoid similar "turmoil and schism" (C. Raymond Holmes, "The Ordination of Women and the Anglican Episcopal Experience: The Road to Schism," [Biblical Research Institute, The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Berrien Springs, 1987], 1). Noteworthy is the fact that the SDA Church has had various contentious moments in History, including the 1888 doctrinal shake-up, the 70s skepticism on the sanctuary doctrine. Perhaps, most of these shake-ups have not been tagged to secular influence like women's ordination. It may be postulated that the danger of fracture is gigantic in our world of technology and multiple connectivity.

domination that the office of pastor never be given to women;"¹ a feeling that causes negligible attention to exegetical issues involved in scriptural texts alluded to.² Consequently a social-economic, and anthropological-humanistic becomes their *modus operandi*.³ David P. Scaer, for instance, postulates that the movement that lauds the ordination of women "originated not with any theological studies but because of the connection of church and state" as exemplified by Lutheran Churches in some European countries.⁴ Contrastingly, most anti-ordinationist arguments, too, seem to neglect an essential element of textual exegesis that, Gordon Fee submits, links the present with the past."⁵

The dilemma is who is right? Conservative voices perceive gender inclusiveness as contrary to Biblical revelation. On the other hand, the pro-ordination camp regards women exclusion from the clergy as contrary to the biblical perspective of the role of women in God's mission.⁶ Based on the historical-grammatical approach to textual study,⁷ this paper analyzes the flaws of the two exegeti-

¹David P. Scaer, "May Women be Ordained as Pastors," *The Springfielder*, 36 (September, 1972): 89.

²Ibid.

³John T. Pless, "What Does This Mean: Women's Ordination and Global Lutheranism Today," *International Lutheran Council*, Niagara Falls, Ontario, September, 2012.

⁴Scaer, 89-90.

⁵Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed., (Luisville, KY: John Knocks Press, 2002), 134. The Bible contains evidence that certain texts may not be taken at face value, and therefore a survey of the context and genres are pertinent to lead to grips with what the recipients grasped.

⁶See Nancy Vyhmeister, ed., *Women in Ministry: A Biblical and Historical perspective*, [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998).

⁷William B. Tolar, "The Grammatical-Historical Method," in *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture*, ed. Bruce Corley, Steve W. Lemke, and Grant I. Lovejoy, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 21; Raymond F. Surburg, "The Presuppositions of the Historical-Grammatical Method as Employed by Historic Lutheranism," *The Springfielder* 38 (1974): 278-288; Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1970), 93-162; Gerhard F. Hasel, "Principles of Biblical Interpretation," in *Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gor-

cal extremes, and recommends the way forward for achieving an amicable agreement in the current stand-off on the ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The paper has used the internet sources to get to where the communication is. The paper has four sections: the first introduces the problem and states the approach used in the study, the second section makes an excursus in the argument for and against women's ordination, while the third section briefly critiques the claims of the two exegetical approaches. The last section concludes the study and proposes recommendation.

2. Excursus in the Argument for and against Women's Ordination

While it is not uncommon to hear some perturbed voices asking as to whether the controversy about the ordination of women is still an issue to recon.¹ This paper joins contrary voices that see a danger for the Remnant Church, and maintains that declarations, ridicule, and turning a blind eye will in no way settle a controversy that seems so deep a dynamite brimming with capacity to fracture the church. In this section the paper briefly examines the dissatisfied voices the "ayes" and the "nays" to the ordination of women. Voices of Non-Adventists on Women Ordination

2.1. Sampling the Non-Adventist 'Nay' Position

From the non-Adventist world, the anti-ordination camp gives several reasons that bar women from ordained ministry. These reasons

don M. Hyde, 163-193. Washington, DC: Biblical Research Committee, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974. Gordon D. Fee, "History as Context for Interpretation," in *The Act of Bible Reading: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Elmer Dyck (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 11; Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 163.

¹These voices, surprisingly, may be heard from two camps that are diametrically opposed to each other. On one side are the contemporary young voices; and the other side that complements these voices is from devout Catholics who postulate that women's ordination into ministry was once and for all settled by the 1994 Pope John Paul's pontifical ruling. See Sara Butler, *Women's Ordination: is it Still an Issue*, (Dunwoodie, NY: St Joseph's Seminary, 2007), 1.

mainly include social-cultural factors, and scriptural factors. These scholars argue that women's ordination is not justifiable despite the tremendous ministry they render to the church of God.¹ Gordon Wenham on his part posits that "opposition to the ordination of women is not based merely on the teaching of the New Testament and traditional church practice, but on an understanding of the nature of ministry and a view of the role of the sexes that runs much deeper and wider than a few Pauline proof texts."²

It is further argued that it is clear that women played a tremendous role in sustaining God's work in the OT and NT but their status was controlled.³ In the former, the fact is attested by the ministries of Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and a host of women who served in the tabernacle. In the latter, apart from Elizabeth and Mary who were Jesus' close relative, women blessed Jesus' mission by the hand-outs they voluntarily gave. Paul's ministry, too, was greatly blessed by the participation of Tabitha, Priscilla, Aquila's wife and Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9). Despite this involvement, women in the OT were not exalted to priesthood; in a similar way, the NT does not mention their ordained.⁴ Daniel H. Chew advances this perspective:

¹Wenham, 310; Pope Sherouda III, *Homosexuality and the Ordination of Women*, (London UK: Coptic Orthodox Publishers, 1993), 36-38

²Wenham, 310.

³J. Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt strongly posit that "there is no chapter and verse that mandates a women's ministry in the church," and lament the dangerous trend that "behind the shifts in our society's attitude toward these issues is a worldview megashift, moving from a Judeo-Christian or biblical framework to a pagan worldview... Unfortunately, one way this pagan framework is being actively imported into the church by self-avowed Christian leaders is through their compromise on the subject of biblical manhood and womanhood." (J. Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt, *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 69-70.

⁴Ibid, 311. See Daniel H. Chew, "Gender Roles: Ordained Order of Mankind towards the Creator," retrieved from www.angelfire.com/falcon/ddd.../GenderRolesOrdainedOrder.pdf. Accessed on February 13, 2013, who, in his comment on 1Tim 2, concurs with Wenham that "only men were priests in the Old Testament, and therefore the example of men in prayer with holy hands is used for Christian men," to offer sacrifice and to exercise authority; see also Robert L Saucy, "Women's Prohibition to Teach Men: An Investigation into its Meaning, and Contemporary Application," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (JETS)* 37 (1994): 79.

The text [1Tim 2] teaches us regarding Paul's commands based upon God's ordained order (τάξις) of how things ought to be. In the first part of our pericope, men are to lift up holy hands in prayer analogous to Old Testament priests presenting themselves holy to God. Likewise, women are to dress modestly as their manner of presenting themselves holy to God. In the second part, Paul prohibited women from teaching and having authority over men so that God's ordained order is preserved in the actions and responsibilities of Christians in the church. Rather, women are to fulfill their ordained roles of which the main one is to "remain in faith and love and sanctification with self-control."¹

For Wenham, the ordination of women cannot be affirmed because male dominance and patriarchy is instinctive and characterizes all society. The dominance is evident in all spheres—sociological, biological, theological, psychological, and cultural. On the cultural and psychological dimension, Wenham observes the negative perception that many married women have on women's ordination is due to reasons that it is inclined to the feminist agenda. Women claim that this trend reduces them to "second-class women doing less than the best for God..." [Ordination makes them] see their God-given instincts of submissiveness and motherhood implicitly criticized by the Church's setting up a quite different ideal of womanhood; one that owes more to the feminist movement than to Scripture, tradition or nature."²

2.2. Sampling the Non-Adventist "Aye" Position

After the above brief look at the response of the Non-Adventists' "Nays" to the issue of women ordination, the paper will now turn to the non-Adventist camp that strongly advocate for women's ordination to pastoral ministry. Frances Young analyses the history of the Catholic Church diachronically and contends that history is evident that "the fact is that, faced with the appeal to history, those who would promote women's ordination counter it with their own search for precedent." He advises that a leaf should be borrowed from:

¹Chew, 11

²Wenham, 319.

Jesus' message and practice [which] were radically egalitarian in their day and constituted a social revolution that likely provoked his crucifixion. It is high time that the church, which claims to embody his good news to the world, stop betraying its own essential heritage of absolute equality. [He affirms that considered as God's priesthood, all people including men and women] have the vocation of being the kings and priests of the creation, of being the celebrants of the cosmic liturgy.¹

John E Toews, arguing for a perception on the issue in regard to Paul's "over-arching theology of the church," advances that the cross ushers in a creation of a redeemed community, "the eschatological people of God." In this new community "all distinctions of race, sex and religious history are removed" making all believers "equal before God and each other."² He studies the Pauline texts that spark different opinions in the debate on women ordination and concludes with the following observations: first, in Gal 3:27-28 Paul does not "eliminate sexual identity" in the eschatological community but underscores the egalitarian outlook on men and women. Second, in 1Cor 7 Paul addresses the freedom and family responsibilities of both men and women, making the chapter in absolute agreement with his theological worldview of full gender equality in the new age community.

Third, in 1Cor 11:2-12, the apostle clarifies that the community of faith ought to freely participate in public worship with decorum. In 14:33-36 the issue of decorum is continued in a different dimension—"women may pray and prophesy as equals in church worship, but they should not use their equality as an occasion for denying others the opportunity for worship by interrupting the service with questions."³ Fourth, 1Tim 8-15, does not issue a general interdiction on women to keep away from participation and leadership. Rather it "prohibits only teaching ... because of its linkage with a domineering attitude or sexual promiscuity...restricts the woman's role in the church only at the point where it threatens to disrupt the

¹Frances Young, "Hermeneutical Questions: The Ordination of Women in the Light of Biblical and Patristic Typology," in *Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches: International Perspectives*, eds. Ian Jones, Kirsty Thorpe, Janet Wootton, (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2008), 25, 31.

²John E. Toews, "The Role of Women in the Church: The Pauline Perspective," *Direction* 9 (January, 1980): 25.

³*Ibid.*, 29.

marriage relationship."¹ Thus, the non-Adventist position strongly advocate for women's ordination to pastoral ministry and submits that there is no reason for curtailing women's ordination on the basis of the Pauline texts.

3. The Positions of Adventist Believers on the Ordination of Women

What is the viewpoint take of Adventist believers² on this issue? The decision by NAD to ordain women to pastoral ministry has sparked fresh reactions that either strongly commend or bitterly oppose to the action. A great percentage of the reactions and correspondences allude to Scriptures as the starting point for their arguments. Below is a brief exposition of the minds of the Adventist believers.

3.1. The "Nay" Voices from the Adventists

Dr. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim posits that what is at stake is the eroded confidence in the Bible as the basis for the Adventists' "entire belief structure, our reason for existence, and our mission to the world."³ The consequent to this, according to Pipim, is that even the clearest biblical texts, like the NT texts that forcefully regulate women's participation, are subjected to criticisms that confine them in time and locale in order to expel them from speaking prescriptively to the church today. Pipim poses a question that seems pertinent. Certain statements of Paul are "command of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:34, 37), and limiting them to the contextual milieu of Paul may raise questions as to whether other doctrinal areas of the church should be treated likewise.⁴ Pipim and his This camp does

¹Ibid., 31.

²This paper differentiates the position of sections of believers from the official position of the SDA Church. So the term "Adventists" will in this case refer to believers not the Church as a denomination.

³Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Campaign for Women's Ordination: Role of Church Leaders and Scholars," Excerpted and modified from *Must We Be Silent?: Issues Dividing Our church*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Berean Books, 2001), xx.

⁴Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Answers to Questions about Women's Ordination" *Adventist Affirm* (1987): 1-3.

not deny the tremendous role women have played in the mission of God.

Pipim, like Chew, scans the OT and NT to surf the ministry of women and sees Huldah who counseled the prophets, (2 Kgs 22:13, 14), women who sang and attended to tabernacles and Temple (1 Samuel 2:22, 1 Chr 25:5, 6, Psa 68:24, 25), women who prayed aloud and prophesied in the church (1 Cor 11:5), those who laboured with Paul (Phil 4:3). In the NT some, including widows, were strongly commended by Paul (Rom 16:1-5, 6, 12, 13, 15; Acts 9:39). Despite their importance, women did not serve as priests in the OT (Exod 28:1, Num 3:1-13), "nor did they serve in the leadership/teaching role of elder or pastor in the New Testament" (1 Tim 2:11-14; 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1Cor 14:33-36).¹

Pipim stands for, and with a host of Adventists² who are determined to "take" the word of God seriously. They sound a call to return to the Word as a sure guide in the matter, and sacrifice their positions and their comfort to advocate for what they perceive as the right thing. Christine G. Byrn, working in the Education Department at PUC boldly speaks against the decision of the Conference Committee under which she is serving: Women do have a place in ministry, but we must be careful not to create divisiveness amongst ourselves or within the world church. Respect for the world church, God's remnant people, must be paramount. In the counsel of our brethren within the world church, it would be best if we humbly acquiesce on this point.³

Again, this paper recognizes that the tension created by the decision to ordain women does not go well with some members of the SDA church and the fear is that if this issue is not handled

¹Ibid, 2; See also Chew, 11.

²The internet contains hundreds of comments by anti-ordination. Some have written bitter letters reacting to the action of the Pacific Union Conference and Southern Conference of SDAs that endorsed the ordination of women to pastoral ministry. The comments are in a form of emails and blogs and yet others are considerably well researched texts copied to friends. The amount of interaction on the net is indicative of a serious problem that need not be underestimated. This paper gives credit to the comments or forwarded comments and letters of John. Tehee, Kathy S. Howley, Christine G. Byrne, Wellesley Muir, and Diana Iversen. As I was looking for the sources, I thought it wise to meet the people where they are—the internet—and I got the sample of the thoughts of men and women who strongly protest against women's ordination.

³Christine G. Byrn, to Elder Rothler, March 26, 2012, letter sent by email as response to the Action of PUC on Women's ordination, Feb 21, 2013.

carefully "the Seventh-day Adventist Church might experience the turmoil and schism which our Episcopal brethren have suffered."¹ After a brief look at the response of the "Nays" the paper will now turn to those who strongly advocate for women to be ordained to pastoral ministry.

3.2. The Adventists 'Aye' Voices to Ordination of Women

As stated earlier, similar strong Adventists' voices for the ordination of women are numerous.² Like in the opposite camp, the voice comes from men and women who consider the step as long overdue and challenge themselves and other proactive communities to follow suit. Because of the trends that seem to give a new understanding to the human roles, Gudmundsson, is confident that "time has come to stand up and be counted and truly act on what we believe, that God is no respecter of persons and that, in Christ, there is no male or female. In these last days of earth's history, he maintains, there is an army of workers waiting for us to tell them that their church affirms their divine calling in all ministries, including the pastoral ministry."³

Keren Katoske identifies a twofold rationale for ordination: to "not only follow biblical instruction *but also* to maintain *credibility before our younger members who are keenly aware of gender issues*" (emphasis supplied).⁴ Dan Smith seems to perceives the ordination as

¹Raymond C. Holmes.

²I express my gratitude to those who took their time to correspond with PUC to express their perception on the committee's walk toward towards women's ordination. Thanks to Daniel Geli, H. Nicholas, Dan Smith, Lourdes-Morales Gudmundsson, Keren Kotoske, Dan Smith and Bob Meckstroth, Courtney Ray, Jared Wright, Wallace D. Minder, B. Djordjevic, G. M. Valentine, Andrea T. King, R. L. Roberts, Rob and DaphneThomas, D. Retzer, Kenra J. H. Valentino, Mr. and Mrs. C. Kohler, and Gregory Clark. Their correspondence puts me in the know of the perception on side of the coin.

³Lourdes-Morales Gudmundsson, to Ricardo Graham, March 14, 2012, letter sent by email as response to the action of PUC on the issue of women's ordination. Accessed on Feb 21, 2013.

⁴Keren Katoske, Wallace D. Minder, to Ricardo Graham, March 14, 2012, letters sent by email as response to the action of PUC on the issue of women's ordination. Accessed on Feb 21, 2013.

an issue of justice and biblical-eschatological. Because God calls the serving clergy to be just (Micah 6:8), egalitarian (Gal 3:28) and selfless (Matt 7:12)— it is insensitivity to the cause of the remnant to look on as our co-laborers in the thrust of the end-time proclamation are not conscripted on board.¹

Courtney Ray, Gilbert M Valentine, and Jared Wright front 'Priesthood of all believers' as a factor for the ordination. They argue that women should be ordained to pastoral ministry because all believers are lifted to the same platform as priests irrespective of gender.² According to Ray the act of ordaining women "not only bears a witness to the world that God truly is not a respecter of persons, but it also shows our commitment to the biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers!"³

As briefly sampled above, the tension created by hesitancy to ordain women is demonstrably high that the issue deserves carefully and patient approach on the part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁴ Gary Patterson observes that the GC by policy has no authority to ordain ministers and, therefore, "overstepped its bounds in seeking to tell the unions"⁵ to or not to ordain women as ministers. Objection to ordain, according to him, is interfering with the eschatological mission work of the Holy Spirit to inspire sons and daughters (Acts 11:17, 18).

Again, Patterson and Smith sum up what may be in the mind of the pro-ordination camp with a question: "how long must we continued [sic] to study this issue? Given that this matter has been under study for over 60 years, there are those who see the current action fur-

¹Dan Smith, to Ricardo Graham, March 14, 2012, letter sent by email as response to the action of PUC on the issue of women's ordination. Accessed on Feb 21, 2013. On the point of equality, see also Randall I. Roberts *et al.*, Rob and Daphne Thomas, to Ricardo Graham, March 14, 2012, letters sent by email as response to the action of PUC on the issue of women's ordination. Accessed on Feb 21, 2013.

²Courtney Ray, Gilbert M. Valentine, and Jared Wright, to Ricardo Graham, March 14, 2012, letters sent by email as response to the action of PUC on the issue of women's ordination. Accessed on Feb 21, 2013.

³Ibid.

⁴Raymond C. Holmes.

⁵Gary Patterson, "Six Points on the Ordination of Women Issue," *paucad-min.adventistfaith.org* at @EbookBrowse (Feb., 13, 2013). 1

ther stalling tactics by a body which...does not have the constituted authority to make the decision for implementation anyway."¹ Smith punches home a strong conclusion: "we need no other papers, conferences, debates over hermeneutics, feminism, or anything else."²

4. "Nay" or "Aye" in the Above Perspectives?: Call for a Balanced Exegesis

Should the World Church answer Patterson's question "how long...?"³ with Smith's answer: "we need no other papers, conferences, debates over hermeneutics, feminism, or anything else"?⁴ This paper realizes that on top of views being skewed to personal feelings, and socio-psychological presuppositions, most of the exegetical exertions have a GIGO⁵ tendency that goes into the biblical text using a particular hermeneutic approach to scoop out information in line with a premeditated goal. The paper, therefore, recommends a continued search into scripture for the solution to this impasse with a balanced biblical approach minus subjectivity. This section intends to point out exegetical difficulties in certain texts that have been the basis for pro and anti-ordination debate, texts that call for comprehensive exegetical probe.⁶

¹Ibid, 5

²Smith.

³Patterson, 5

⁴Smith.

⁵GIGO (Garbage In, Garbage Out) is one of the great proverbs of the computer age which says that if invalid, inaccurate or inappropriate data is "entered into a system, the resulting output will be invalid, inaccurate or inappropriate. In other words, the quality of the output is directly dependent on the quality of the input." See Rod Short, "GIGO," *The International Maritime Human Element Bulletin* 4(July 2004), atsb.gov.au/marine/pdf/184_hanjin_dampier.pdf, (March 4, 2013). This is true with reading the biblical text. The meaning derived from a text is often dependent on the method employed.

⁶Fee, 102-110; Erickson, 17.

4.1. Is there Subordination in Eph 5:22?

Even taken as a text that orders a family as a miniature Christ-Church relationship, Eph 5:22 is explained out of its contextual gist. Paul here seems not to talk on issues of family like he strongly does in other exhortations. Noteworthy is the fact that in the Greek text of Eph 5:22 the passive participle *hupotassomanoi* (being submitted) is absent and the translators of v. 22 adopt the implied passive participle (being submitted) from v. 21 to complete the verbless clause ("wives to your own husbands as [~~being submitted~~] to the Lord"). Since, normally, a passive requires a subject or an agent, then the acting force on men (v 21) and women (v 22) may be the impact of being filled by the Holy Spirit in verse 18. Verse 22, therefore, appears to conclude of a 'how-words' (participles) describing the manner (perhaps means) by which the believers can "be ...filled with the Holy Spirit" (v 18).

KJV and NKJ render appropriately the Greek text to answer the participial implicit question 'how?': "Be filled with the Spirit" "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" "giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God [Greek, Christ] (vv 19-21). Wives, unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph 5:19-22).

The above brief observation suggests that the submission of women to their husbands is in the context of the general Spirit generated submission of the believers to one another to foster redemptive harmony of the consequent abounding of the in-dwelling Spirit (v 18).¹

4.2. Woman: Learn in Silence; was Deceived; Saved Through Childbearing

One of the Pauline commands that have provoked debate on women's ordination is the silence of women in 1Tim 2:11,12. Proponents opposed to women ordination see a prescription on the issue of women in pastoral ministry. However, most proponents who take this text at face value neglect its interpretation in total conformity

¹This is in consonance with Rom 14:15, 20, 21 and 1Cor 8:13 where, for the sake of unity and mission, Paul restrains himself from eating what is generally permissible (See also Rom 9:7-18).

to its the context. If exegesis and context is not important how can the apparent "contradictions" be overcome and how can it be harmonized with the rest of the context?

The silence section seems to be connected to the entire text (2:1-10 and 12-15) and the conjunctions involved attest to the fact that it is one block text. The conjunction *gar* (for), according to Daniel B Wallace, fall in the larger family of logical conjunctions "which relate the movements of thought from one passage to another by expressing logical relationship between the connected ideas."¹

Additionally, the same conjunction belongs to a subfamily known as explanatory conjunctions that announces the arrival of additional information. It may, therefore, be proposed that *gar* in v. 13 announces the onset of additional information that is logically related to the idea in the previous verses.² If this is the case then verses 11-12 ought to be linked to the argument started, perhaps, earlier in verse 1Tim 1:18. Thus it would be an exegetical fallacy to make conclusion about the silence of women by a cursory look at 1Tim 2:11,12 in isolation of what might be Paul's overarching idea in the pericope.³ Paul's idea incorporates learning in silence, woman's deception, and salvation through childbearing as elucidation of what Paul discusses in verses 11 and 12.

¹See Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 298-299.

²Daniel B. Wallace posits that the conjunction *gar* is described as an explanatory conjunction that announces additional information. It is often translated "for, you see, that is, namely." Wallace, 298-299.

³Fee itemizes some guidelines for getting in touch with, and evaluating the cultural background and data of the text under study. He recommends that first, "determine whether some cultural milieu of your passage is basically Jewish, Greco-Roman, or some combinations of both" (Ibid, 102) "determine the meanings and significance of persons, places, events, institutions, concepts, or customs" (Ibid, 104), "gather parallels or counterparallel texts from Jewish or Greco-Roman sources that may aid in understanding the cultural milieu of the author of your passage" (Ibid, 105), "be aware of the background information with which you are dealing" (Ibid, 109), "determine the date of the background information" (Ibid, 109), "be aware of the diverse traditions in your background material and weigh their value for your passage" (Ibid, 110).

4.3. Equality and Priesthood of all Believers: A Basis for Women's Ordination?

Proponents of Women's ordination refer to the Gal 3:28 and 1Pet 2:9 to argue that it is unjust in the new age to have a lopsided ministry on the basis of gender. This paper asks two basic questions, first is Paul advocating for a genderless community without any blueprint for gender-based roles? The second question asks whether Peter had in mind the practical priesthood or whether he was talking of an abstract conception of what the church ought to be. Some scholars have challenged the proposition of gender equality on the basis of Paul's and Peter's statements. They contend that such proposition lacks serious biblical hermeneutics. Scaer, for example, avers that a prudent study of Gal 3:23-29 may reveal that Paul is concerned with the justification of sinner before God. This justification makes believers to be sons and daughters of God. Paul's questions "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?" (1Cor 13:29) call for a negative answer. This attests that salvation does not endorse role interchangeability. It attests that gender differences and their associated roles is an observable fact in the redeemed community.¹

Similarly, the NT seems not to talk about priesthood² as an institution in the redeemed community. The book of Hebrews mentions the office in comparison with the efficacy of Christ Jesus. Commenting on 1Pet 2:9, Gleeson observes that "the NT priesthood is Christians as a group, not as individuals...what we find in the pages of the NT is a complete discontinuity, a complete break, between the Israelite priesthood...[and a movement towards a trend of] Christian leaders, workers, co-workers and ministers"³ with Christ. Moreover, the concept of priesthood is rooted in the OT where God declared Israel as a priestly nation (Exod 19:6 NRV). Gleeson seems right that the institution of priesthood was discontinued in the antitype, Jesus Christ. However priesthood as obstruct referring to God's elect was not discontinued. The Church becomes the fulfillment of the OT priestly nation. It should be noted that the OT priestly

¹Scaer, 4, 5.

² Priesthood appears 8 times in the NT: only twice in 1Pet 2:5,9. is the term used in relation to the church community.

³Brian Gleeson, "Ordained Persons and Their Ministries: New Testament Foundations and Variations," *Australian eJournal of Theology* 7 (June 2006): 2.

nation did not replace the Levitical priesthood, and despite women being part of the priestly nation they were not appointed as priests.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This paper started with a dilemma as to who is right: the conservative voices who perceive gender inclusiveness as “contrary to the teaching of the Bible,” or the pro-ordination camp who regard women exclusion from the clergy as contrary to the “biblical” perspective of the role of women in God’s mission. This paper observes that neither of the camps is right. The NT seems quiet on the issue of the Ordination of Women. The texts employed to justify positions are either read from the surface level, or are applied without a keen regard for the context and syntactical relationship. Prohibitions on women in the NT may be more of contextual than permanent interdictions. Similarly, freedom and liberty texts seem to refer generally to the redemptive liberty attained in Jesus Christ. Thus, the following recommendations are pertinent.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the observations above, and based on the understanding that the Seventh-Day Adventist Church was raised for the purpose of proclaiming the end time message enveloped in the Three Angels’ Messages, this paper proposes that the World Church halts the Ordination of women to pastoral ministry. The paper gives the following reasons and recommendations.

1. As stated above, the NT seems quiet on Ordination of Women and the texts employed seem superficially and subjectively analyzed to justify positions. Prohibitions on women in the NT are not a permanent interdiction; and liberty texts refer generally to the redemptive status of attained by in Jesus Christ. *Based on this observation this paper recommends a halt on the Ordination and that more study be made to establish grounds for “Yes” or “No.”*
2. The Seventh-day Adventist Church should recognize the role of women and their rich variety of gifts usable in the mission of the Church. Among others, the ratio of departmental appointments

at all levels should be increased. *Women may be appointed elders as need arises but, to avoid acting without established biblical basis, should not be ordained.*

3. To eradicate the fallacies of studying the texts from goal oriented perspectives, the Seventh-day Adventist Church should invest more in studies and researches on the verses that both the pro-ordination and anti-ordination camps use. The use of the historical-critical method, that treats scripture as another piece of literature, empties the biblical text of its principle message as binding for believers irrespective of generation. *Therefore, the principle that scripture interprets itself (inter-textual comparison), with due consideration of the context and textual analysis, should be used in handling all biblical passages that generate controversies.*
4. In line with the quinquennial theme "Revival that Counts," the church should set strategies to refocus the believers on their calling as the eschatological Remnant (Rev 14:9-12). The believers should realize their status that "they are not of the world" (John 17:16) yet Jesus "sent them in the world" (v 18) to be the rays of light given to them through the Lord's sanctification (v 19). *There ought to be a decisive scheme to strongly address the over-domineering secular influences that constitute the backdrop of pressures on the Church even to the level of blurring her divinely assigned mission.*
5. The Church should reemphasize her missional universality summed up in the catchphrase "Unity in Diversity." This reflects the NT operational structure demonstrated Acts 15:1-35 where the affluent gentile church was in concord with the leadership in the destitute Judean region. The settlement of theological and missional issues at Jerusalem demonstrates "Unity for the Diversity" of mission that Christ assigned the apostles. Further still, the modus operandi in the chapter demonstrates "Unity through Diversity" — the Jerusalem Council observed the way the Spirit had worked in divergent contexts and this became foundational for generation of a unity that flagged the expansion of Christianity. Wouldn't the western Church benefit from the testimonies of the "conservative" church in Africa by observing God's works in the "primitive Adventism" that is closer to the biblical culture? *This paper recommends that the West sings "Give me the old, old religion" and come to Africa to practically see how the Spirit works in the context of "the old, old religion."*
6. Patterson's argues that "ordination is, by General Conference policy, the purview of the union level of governance. This being the

case, the General Conference has overstepped its bounds in seeking to tell the unions that they may or may not ordain women to the gospel ministry."¹ If this is a subjective interpretation, it might indicate that the GC's scope of leadership is not well articulated. If Patterson is right, then the current church power scope does not empower the GC to keep doctrinal and structural harmony of the denomination. *Yet for the Church to remain faithful to Scripture, the leadership, mainly the GC committee and GC in session must be bold especially on decisions regarding doctrine and unity.*

7. Too much power is invested in a pastor. One may postulate that the scramble for women ordination is not because women want empowerment to ordain church elders, to officiate in marriage enactments, or to baptize. The reason could be more about the rights and privileges that appertain to the ordained ministry. *Based on the NT concept of ordination, the SDA Church should make clear the perceived difference between ordination to ministry and ordination to other offices like eldership or deaconry.*
8. The OT has many cultural ideas that God adopts and purifies or modifies. Examples of these are the ark of the covenant, the sacrificial system, the kingship and others. There are others He decisively rejects and warns his chosen Israel not to use and touch, think of idolatry, and homosexuality. Studies reveal that there were women priests in other cultures, and that women had more freedom in other cultures than in Israel.² Yet at the same time their dignity in those cultures was in no way comparable to the dignity given in Israel.³ *If scriptures does not give reasons why God never adopted the practice of women as priests, and yet He dignified them than the other cultures, then it may be advisable to live it at that without argument over why God did it so.*

¹Patterson, 1.

²Wenham, 311, avers that "Israel differed from the surrounding nations in not admitting women to the paid ministry. Canaanites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Egyptians all gave women formal roles in the cult: high-priestesses, nuns and sacred prostitutes are known."

³Anthony Hutchinson, "Women and Ordination: Introduction to the Biblical Context," *Dialogue* 14 (1981): 58.