

## Troubling Questions

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Since when can any segment of the Adventist organization justify voting into policy a decision that is contrary to General Conference policy, while at the same time, claiming loyalty to the church? Example: on July 29, 2012 when Columbia Union voted itself into insubordination and rebellion:

'This is not an easy time for the church, but it is the time for the church, said Pastor Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, following the vote. We are part of the worldwide church, and we are united in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,' (Adventist Review Staff with Taashi Rowe, *Adventist Review*, "Columbia Union Votes Ordination Without Regard to Gender," <http://www.adventistreview.org/article/5566/archives/issue-2012-1521/21cn-columbia-union-votes-gender-neutral-ordinations>, accessed 2013-05-22).

General Conference policy *is* the policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And yet, loyalty is claimed as though they are doing the Lord a favor by correcting an issue supposedly overlooked for generations by the church's pioneers, subsequent leaders, and even God's prophet! Their push in favor of Women's Ordination continues without endorsement from the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy or agreement by the world church.

If the Lord wanted His dedicated women to be priests in the Old Testament, and to be ordained ministers in the New, why hasn't He given clear indication in His revealed Word? Since when are units of the church at liberty to vote church policy without our Lord's teaching in support? Why would not the Lord have instructed His people long ago, settling this question at the beginning so that in this late hour our energies might be more effectively spent? The truth is that He *has* made His will known on multiple occasions.

Is it a matter then of His not speaking, or of our not listening?

Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy offer many illustrations demonstrating how the Holy Spirit has worked through highly committed and dedicated women of God in the past. This work no doubt they will continue to do until His work is finished on earth---and without the necessity of their being ordained pastors.

"Gods people divided": can there possibly be a more devastating clause describing Satan's passion successfully operative within God's church? It matters not to Satan what issue might accomplish division, just so it gets the job done. And yet, in spite of our duly elected General Conference President's appeal that units not place themselves in direct opposition to their church, *they ignore him*. This is a new day. How can this be?

For eight years my duties included serving on the General Conference Executive Committee. Issues from local conferences, unions, and divisions were passed onward to us to appear on our agenda. We considered these matters with prayer and solemn discussion. These units sought the decision of the General Conference and there was cooperation and approval. After all, that's why they were submitted in first place.

This all fits together, because according to our *Church Manual*, that is to be a prime function of the Committee. To wit,

When differences arise between churches and conferences or institutions, appeal to the next higher constituent level is proper until it reaches the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee or the General Conference Session. Between these meetings, the General Conference Executive Committee constitutes the body of final authority on all questions (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 18th edition, revised 2010, p. 31).

It's imperative that we treat seriously the Bible truth that says, "A house divided against itself cannot stand" (Matthew 12:25; Luke 11:17). At this serious time when God's work needs to be finished, we need to heed the inspired admonition: "Press together, press together!" May the Holy Spirit help us to stand together and not let Satan divide us---whatever the issue may be.

*BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Ben J. Liebelt began his pastoral service in Kansas and then Colorado. Soon he had served in several unions and with the General Conference. He was also conference president at various times of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming conferences. Aged 90, he still preaches the Third Angel's Message.*