



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

New Jersey Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists, Inc

July 24, 2012

James A Greene
Executive Secretary

Sent Via Email

Elder Ted N. C. Wilson, President
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

2303 Brunswick Avenue
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-4410

Phone: (609) 802-0855
FAX: (609) 802-0868

E-mail: jgreene@njcsda.org
Web Site: www.njcsda.org

RE: June 29, 2012 Letter to Columbia Union Officers and Executive Committee Members

Dear Elder Wilson:

I am in receipt of a copy of your letter of June 29, 2012 addressed to the Union Officers and Union Executive Committee Members. I want to thank my Union Officers for sharing a copy of your letter with the delegates to the Special Columbia Union Session meeting so that we may have the viewpoint of our World Leaders as we meet to discuss this important issue of the ordination of women to the gospel ministry.

I have read and re-read your letter several times, and while I personally resonate with your appeal for unity, my conscience is struggling with how to react to your appeal for absolute uniformity in how the Columbia Union relates to General Conference Policy on this issue. After much prayer and thought, I feel that I must share with you and the other World Leaders why I must at this time vote against this recommendation of the General Conference in Session while also voting in favor of the General Conference in Session actions concerning the doctrines of the Church.

As ministers in the SDA Church, we have been for years teaching all new converts the 27 (now 28) Fundamental Beliefs adopted by this Church, including belief number 14, which reads as follows:

14. Unity in the Body of Christ:

“The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27, 29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23.)” *Taken from the Official SDA Church Website*

Your letter is asking that the members in attendance at the Special Union Constituency Meeting vote contrary to the Church Doctrine above. Your letter does not give any scriptural nor Spirit of Prophecy reference specifically forbidding the ordination of women. Instead your appeal is for us to walk in lockstep with the GC actions of 1990 and 1995, even though these actions are themselves in direct opposition to our church doctrine on unity. On page 7, point #5 of your letter you quote the 1990 GC



Session action to say “in view of the possible risk of disunity, dissension, and diversion from the mission of the church” the Session approved the Annual Council recommendation that ordination of women to the gospel ministry not be authorized.”

I note with interest that the reason for not granting approval was a fear of “disunity, dissension and diversion from the mission of the Church”, which is exactly what is happening in our Church today because of church leadership’s failure to act in accordance with our Church Doctrines. Today, members, especially the younger generations in North America and other Divisions, see the leaders of our Church at all levels, from the local congregation to the GC, providing leadership that does not sync with what they believe the Bible and our official Doctrines teach in the matter of human relations and discrimination.

Because the 1990 action was based on the recommendation of Annual Council to not act at that time, it is obvious to me that Annual Council can vote to recommend a change in the wording of the policy at this time to allow for the ordination of women pastors, even without waiting for the next GC Session. I personally believe that if you, as our world leader, would take a stand and publicly state to the entire church that we must end this discrimination and start administering this church in accordance with our doctrines, the rest of the world leaders would step into line with you and seek to stop the discrimination in our church.

One of my favorite quotations from Ellen White is as follows:

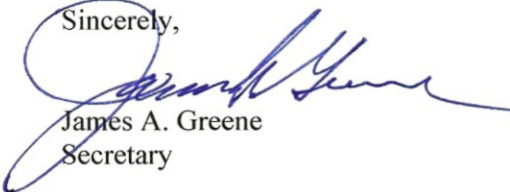
“The greatest want of the world is the want of men-- men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.” *Education p. 57*

If Martin Luther and the other reformers had heeded the advice and counsel of the church leaders, during the time of the reformation, to cherish church unity over what the Bible teaches, there would not be a Seventh-day Adventist Church today. It was because of these reformers willingness to place scripture above church policy and practice that the great protestant reformation took place.

I appeal to you to reflect on our official church policy on this matter and how it conflicts with the Bible and Church Doctrine. I am convicted that the Bible and doctrine must take precedence over policy and that true unity comes not from strict adherence to church policy, but from adherence to doctrine and the mission of our church.

Please know that I am praying for you and your leadership during these challenging times.

Sincerely,



James A. Greene
Secretary

C: GC Officers and Division Presidents (Request GC President’s Office Share with All Others)
NAD Officers
Columbia Union Officers