

# Confusion on Ecclesiology and Church Authority



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# Remnant Church of Prophecy

- ✿ Revelation 12:17
- ✿ “It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives; and Satan, with all his arts and hellish power, cannot change the truth of God into a lie. While the great adversary will try his utmost to make of none effect the word of God, truth must go forth as a lamp that burneth.” — PM 389.3



# Enfeebled and Defective

“During ages of spiritual darkness the church of God has been as a city set on a hill. From age to age, through successive generations, the pure doctrines of heaven have been unfolding within its borders. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.” (AA 12.1)

# The Shaking

- ❖ Hebrews 12:25-29;  
everything that can  
be shaken will be  
shaken
- ❖ Revelation 3:16 -  
Christ will vomit out  
lukewarm Adventists  
from His body  
(shaken out)



# The Shaking

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.” (EW 270.2)

# The Shaking

“I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.” (EW 270.3)

# The Shaking

- ❖ The Church as is appears right now, is not how it will be on the other side of the shaking and when Jesus comes.
- ❖ We have schools teaching Darwinian evolution under the guise of Academic Freedom

# The Shaking

- ❖ We have a schools that are creating LGBT support groups on campus, not to help them understand the Bible and lead them to Christ, but to encourage them in their lifestyle.
- ❖ We have unions and an entire Division standing up to the authority of the General Conference.



# The Shaking

- ❖ We are facing the greatest crisis yet in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- ❖ We do not know exactly how this will all play out. That is what can be unsettling.
- ❖ The comforting fact is that we have been told that the ship will go through.

# The Shaking Fulfilled

“The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. We must be divested of our self-righteousness and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ.” (2SM 380.2)

# Origin of Rebellion

“There was contention among the angels. Lucifer and his sympathizers were striving to **reform** the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into His unsearchable wisdom and ascertain His purposes in exalting His Son, and endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. They **rebelled** against the **authority** of the Son.” (SR 15.1)

# Past is Prologue

“I question whether genuine rebellion is ever curable. Study in Patriarchs and Prophets the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. This rebellion was extended, including more than two men. It was led by two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, men of renown. Call rebellion by its right name and apostasy by its right name, and then consider that the experience of the ancient people of God with all its objectionable features was faithfully chronicled to pass into history.”

“The Scripture declares, “These things ... are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11). And if men and women who have the knowledge of the truth are so far separated from their great Leader that they will take the great leader of apostasy and name him Christ our Righteousness, it is because they have not sunk deep into the mines of the truth. They are not able to distinguish the precious ore from the base material.” (2SM 393.2)

# History Repeats

“The history of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram is being repeated, and will be repeated till the close of time. Who will be on the Lord’s side? Who will be deceived, and in their turn become deceivers?”—Letter 15, 1892. (LDE 173.2)

# Rebellion of Korah

- ❖ Numbers 16 and 17
- ❖ Entire chapter in Patriarchs and Prophets pp. 395-405
- ❖ Korah was ringleader and Dathan and Abiram conspired with him

# Rebellion of Korah

- ❖ Deep-laid plot and conspiracy against God's appointed leader
- ❖ Disaffected that they could not go into Promised Land
- ❖ Blamed Moses for leading them to die in the wilderness so he could be a prince over them.



“Professing great interest in the prosperity of the people, they first whispered their discontent to one another and then to leading men of Israel. Their insinuations were so readily received that they ventured still further, and at last they really believed themselves to be actuated by zeal for God.” (PP 396.4)

# Rebellion of Korah

“They were successful in alienating two hundred and fifty princes, men of renown in the congregation. With these strong and influential supporters they felt confident of making a radical change in the government and greatly improving upon the administration of Moses and Aaron. Jealousy had given rise to envy, and envy to **rebellion.**” (PP 397)

# Rebellion of Korah

“The next work of the conspirators was with the people. To those who are in the wrong, and deserving of reproof, there is nothing more pleasing than to receive sympathy and praise. And thus Korah and his associates gained the attention and enlisted the support of the congregation. The charge that the murmurings of the people had brought upon them the wrath of God was declared to be a mistake.”

“They said that the congregation were not at fault, since they desired nothing more than their rights; but that Moses was an overbearing ruler; that he had reproved the people as sinners, when they were a holy people, and the Lord was among them.” (PP 397.3)

# Rebellion of Korah

“In this work of disaffection there was greater union and harmony among the discordant elements of the congregation than had ever before existed. Korah’s success with the people increased his confidence and confirmed him in his belief that the usurpation of authority by Moses, if unchecked, would be fatal to the liberties of Israel; he also claimed that God had opened the matter to him, and had authorized him to make a change in the government before it should be too late.” (PP 398.1)

# Rebellion of Korah

- ❖ Korah, Dathan, and Abiram bring the rebellion out into the open once they have enough support
- ❖ Moses had not suspected this plot
- ❖ It was clear that the majority of the congregation had sympathy with the rebellion

# Rebellion of Korah

“Dathan and Abiram had not taken so bold a stand as had Korah; and Moses, hoping that they might have been drawn into the conspiracy without having become wholly corrupted, summoned them to appear before him, that he might hear their charges against him. But they would not come, and they insolently refused to acknowledge his authority. Their reply, uttered in the hearing of the congregation, was, . . .

“Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up.” (PP 399.2)

“Thus they applied to the scene of their bondage the very language in which the Lord had described the promised inheritance.” (PP 399.3)



# Rebellion and Witchcraft

- ❖ 1 Samuel 15:23 - “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as wickedness and idolatry.”
- ❖ Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and all their families were swallowed up as the earth opened up.
- ❖ The 250 men of renown were devoured by fire.
- ❖ Reaction from the congregation? “Ye have killed the people of the Lord!” - Numbers 16:41

# Rebellion of Korah

“They had been flattered by Korah and his company until they really believed themselves to be very good people, and that they had been wronged and abused by Moses. Should they admit that Korah and his company were wrong, and Moses right, then they would be compelled to receive as the word of God the sentence that they must die in the wilderness.

**They were not willing to submit to this,** and they tried to believe that Moses had deceived them.”

“They had fondly cherished the hope that a new order of things was about to be established, in which praise would be substituted for reproof, and ease for anxiety and conflict. The men who had perished had spoken flattering words and had professed great interest and love for them, and the people concluded that Korah and his companions must have been good men, and that Moses had by some means been the cause of their destruction.” (PP 401.4)

# Rebellion of Korah

“In the rebellion of Korah is seen the working out, upon a narrower stage, of the same spirit that led to the rebellion of Satan in heaven. It was pride and ambition that prompted Lucifer to complain of the government of God, and to seek the overthrow of the order which had been established in heaven. Since his fall it has been his object to infuse the **same spirit** of envy and discontent, the same ambition for position and honor, into the minds of men.”

“He thus worked upon the minds of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, to arouse the desire for self-exaltation and excite envy, distrust, and rebellion. Satan caused them to reject God as their leader, **by rejecting the men of God’s appointment.** Yet while in their murmuring against Moses and Aaron they blasphemed God, they were so deluded as to think themselves righteous, and to regard those who had faithfully reproved their sins as actuated by Satan.” (PP 403.3)

# Rebellion in Book of Jude

- ❖ False gospel turns grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 3, 4)
- ❖ Those who refuse to submit to God and the true gospel rebel against God
- ❖ Jude 5 - Children of Israel destroyed who did not believe

# Rebellion in Book of Jude

- ❖ Jude 6 - Fallen angels left the glory of heaven; now waiting for the day of judgment
- ❖ Jude 11 - Cain, Balaam, and Korah
- ❖ False gospel leads to rebellion against God

# Application of Korah's Rebellion

- ❖ Korah was dissatisfied with delay into Promised Land
- ❖ He led a rebellion against the leaders of God's appointment
- ❖ Turned God's people against the government and order of God



# Application of Korah's Rebellion

“For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and **rebellion** shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The **same sins** have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and **strife** among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”—Manuscript 4, 1883. (Ev 696.2)

# Insubordination and Delay

“We may have to remain here in this world because of **insubordination** many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ’s sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action.”—Letter 184, 1901. (Ev 696.3)

# Current Issues

- ❖ Satan's core issue in the Great Controversy is his discontent with Christ's authority.
- ❖ Some of the major heresies happening today all circulate around undermining God's authority and/or His delegated sources of authority.

# Current Issues

- ❖ Anti-Trinitarians denigrate Christ and the Holy Spirit's authority by claiming that they are less than what they really are (Both are God).
- ❖ Gender equality destroys the biblical model in the home where the husband is the head (Eph. 5:23). Thus, Christ's delegated authority in the home is destroyed.

❖ “Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of woman’s rights and the so-called dress reform might as well sever all connections with the third angel’s message. The spirit which attends the one cannot be in harmony with the other. The Scriptures are plain upon the relations and rights of men and women.” 1T 457

❖ “Under God, Adam was to stand at the **head** of the earthly family, to maintain the principles of the heavenly family. This would have brought peace and happiness. But the law that none ‘liveth to himself’ (Romans 14:7), Satan was determined to oppose. He desired to live for self. He sought to make himself a center of influence. It was this that had incited rebellion in heaven, and it was man’s acceptance of this principle that brought sin on earth. When Adam sinned, man broke away from the heaven-ordained center. A demon became the central power in the world.” CT 33.1

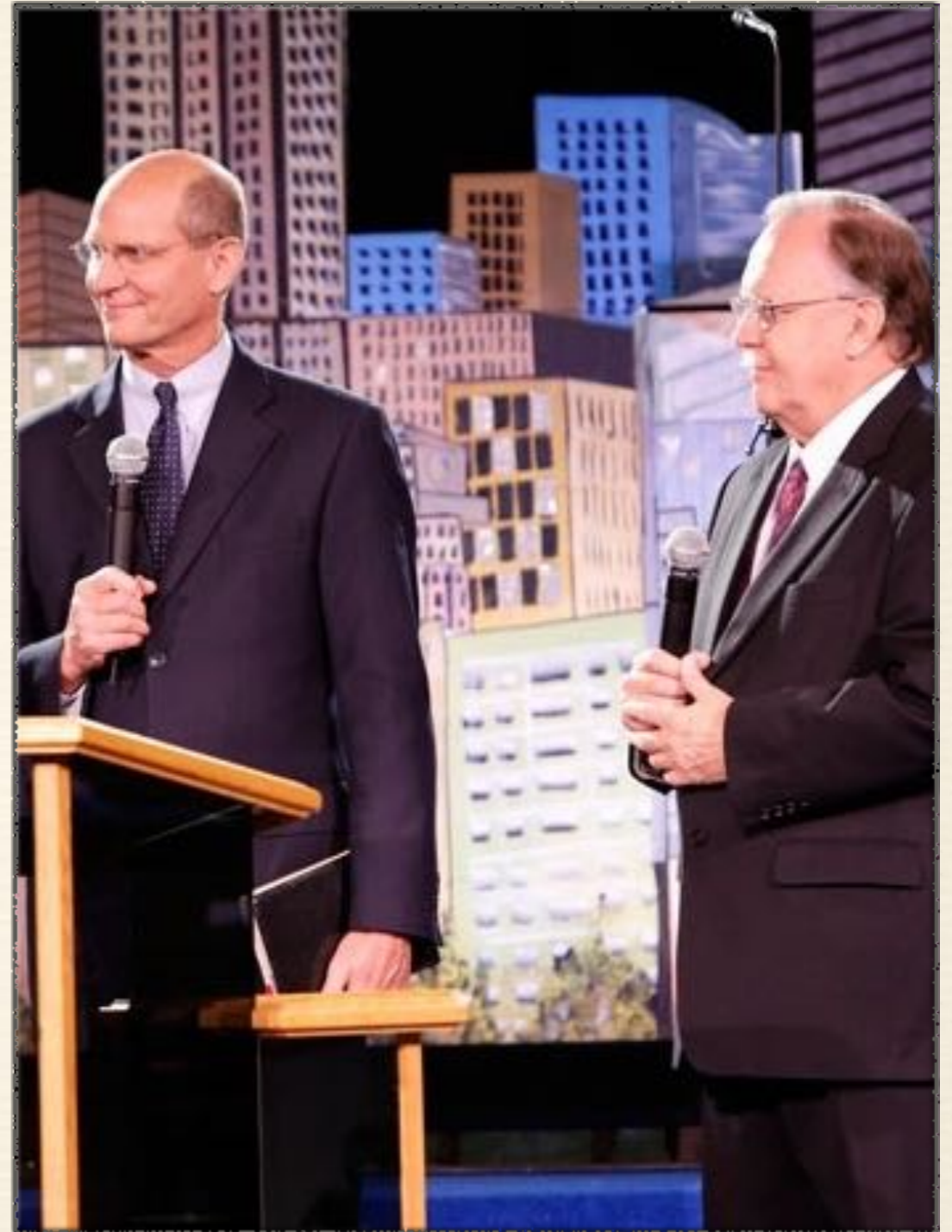
# Current Issues

- ❖ Women's ordination/Non-Compliance usurps the authority of the General Conference in Session in the name of individual conscience, thus rejecting God's highest delegated authority on earth.

# Current Church Crisis



How Did We Get Here?



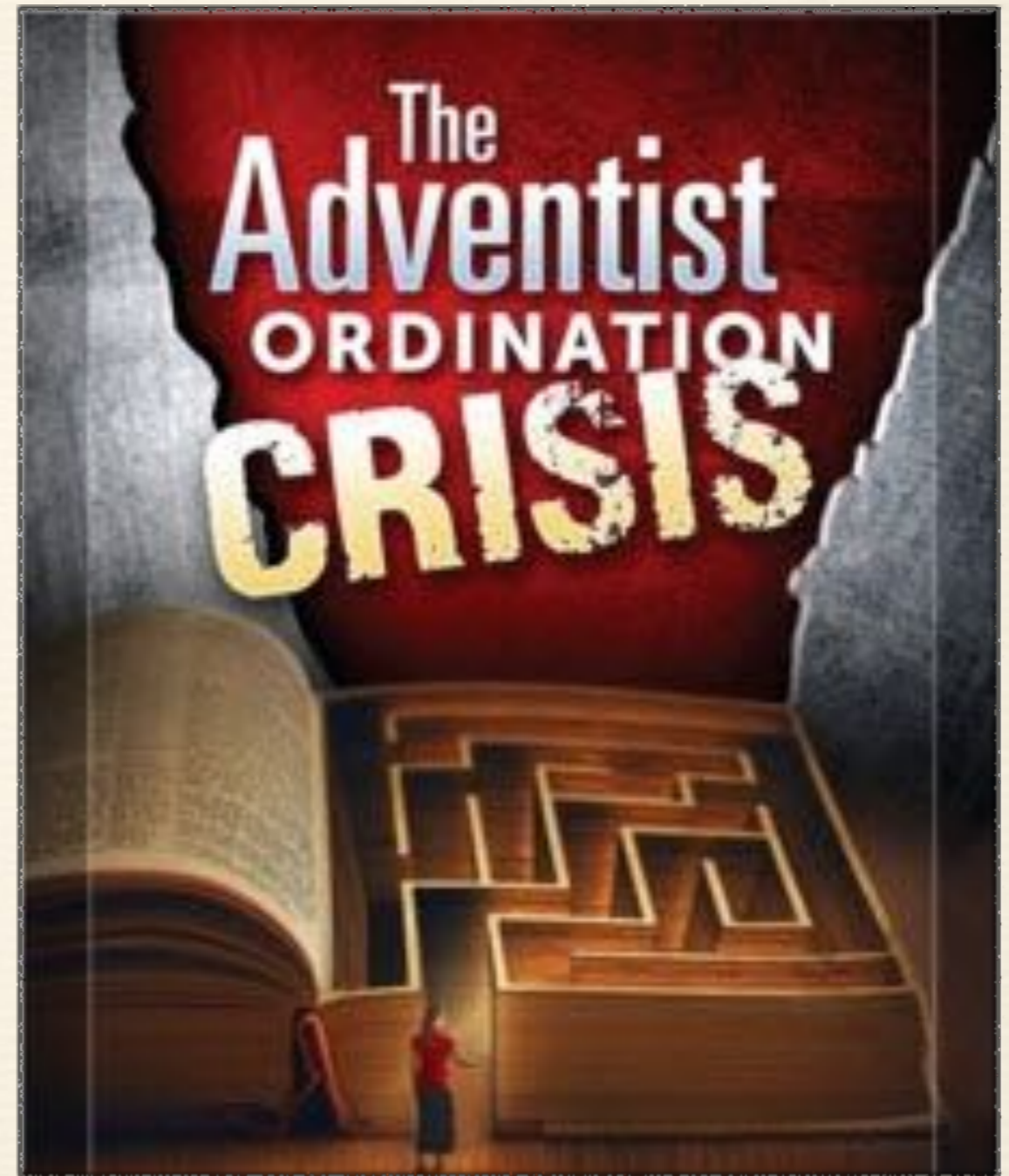


# Authority in the Church

“I have been shown that no man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the **highest authority that God has upon the earth**, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered. Your error was in persistently maintaining your private judgment of your duty against the voice of the highest authority the Lord has upon the earth.” (3T 492)

# Issue of Women's Ordination

- ❖ The GC in Session has voted NO three times on Women's Ordination:
  - ❖ 1990, 1995, and 2015



# 1990 GC Session

“In view of the widespread lack of support for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry in the world Church and in view of the possible risk of disunity, dissension, and diversion from the mission of the Church, we do not approve ordination of women to the gospel ministry.”

Motion passed by a vote of 1,173 to 377  
(75.7% to 24.3%)

# Motion at 1995 GC Session

❖ North American Division asked for a variance

The General Conference vests in each division the right to authorize the ordination of individuals within its territory in harmony with established policy. In addition, where circumstances do not deem it inadvisable, a division may authorize the ordination of qualified individuals without regard to gender. In divisions where the division executive committee takes specific actions approving the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, women may be ordained to serve in those divisions.

# 1995 GC Session

- ❖ Alfred C. McClure, NAD president, spoke for 20 minutes in favor of the motion.
- ❖ Then P. Gerard Damsteegt, ThD, spoke for 20 minutes against the motion.
- ❖ Dr. Raoul Dederen, retired dean of the seminary, closed with a 20 minute presentation in favor of the motion.

# 1995 GC Session

- ❖ After the three presentations, the issue was debated from the floor.
- ❖ The three main presentations as well as the debate from the floor was a discussion on what the Bible says about ordaining women as pastors.
- ❖ The motion failed by a vote of 1481 No (68.8%) to 673 Yes (31.2%)

# 2015 GC Session

- ❖ At the 2010 GC Session, a request was made from a delegate that the theology of ordination be studied
- ❖ This led to the development of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC)
- ❖ TOSC was largely composed of scholars from the North American Division

# 2015 GC Session

- ❖ TOSC had one key point of agreement and that is that ordination is biblical.
- ❖ There were three different views on Women's Ordination:
  - ❖ 1) That it is biblical
  - ❖ 2) That it is not biblical
  - ❖ 3) That it is not biblical but it can still be allowed (used history of Israel and asking for a king)



# Motion at 2015 GC Session

After your prayerful study on ordination from the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the reports of the study commissions, and;

After your careful consideration of what is best for the Church and the fulfillment of its mission,

Is it acceptable for division executive committees, as they may deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry? Yes or No

# 2015 GC Session

- ❖ This motion was debated for several hours.
- ❖ The debate was almost exclusively about whether women's ordination is biblical (not on division variance).
- ❖ Final vote: 1381 No (58.4%) 977 Yes (41.3%) Abstentions 5 (0.21%)

# Authority of GC Session

- ❖ 3T 492 says that the General Conference “is the highest authority that God has upon the earth.”
- ❖ Three times God has spoken through the highest authority that He has.
- ❖ Despite that, many in the church refuse to accept and acknowledge this authority.

# Authority of GC Session

“I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man. Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and to say what plans shall be followed.”

# Authority of GC Session

“But when, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from **all parts of the field** is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body.” (9T 260.1)

# Authority of GC Session

“At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God’s work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected.”

“God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, **shall have authority.** The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work.” (9T 260.2)

# Modern Application of Korah

- ❖ God had invested Moses with authority to lead His people.
- ❖ God spoke with Moses face-to-face.
- ❖ Moses was invested with divine **authority** to execute God's will for His people.
- ❖ Korah rebelled against that authority and stirred up God's people to follow his insubordination.



# Current Church Crisis

- ❖ God has invested the General Conference, **in session**, with authority to direct and lead His church (3T 492 and 9T 260).
- ❖ We do not have a living prophet like Moses that speaks to God face-to-face as did Moses.
- ❖ But the prophet that God gave to His last church says that the GC in session is the highest authority on earth.

# Current Church Crisis

- ❖ Thus, the GC in session is invested with divine authority to execute God's will for His last day church.
- ❖ The GC leadership, including the president and the GC executive committee, are responsible for implementing what is voted at a GC in session.

# Current Church Crisis

- ❖ There are two Unions in North America that voted in 2012 to proceed with ordaining “without regard to gender.”
- ❖ They have not backed down from their votes despite being out of harmony with what has been voted at GC in session in 1990, 1995, and 2015.

# Current Church Crisis

- ❖ As a result of the ongoing non-compliance, the GC Executive Committee voted at the 2018 Annual Council to start a process of dealing with non-compliant entities.
- ❖ 185 voted Yes (59.5%); 124 No (39.9%); 2 (0.6%) Abstained

# Current Church Crisis

- ❖ Shortly after the Annual Council, the North American Division held its Year-End meeting.
- ❖ At this meeting, the president of the NAD said that the NAD would continue to agitate the issue of Women's Ordination despite the votes by the GC.

# Current Church Crisis

- ❖ The NAD also voted to discuss with GC of coming into financial parity within two or three years.
- ❖ The vote passed 121 Yes (57%) to 90 No (43%)
- ❖ In other words, the NAD wants to cut back from about 6% to about 2% for the amount of tithe it sends on to the GC.

# Current Church Crisis

- ❖ As in the rebellion of Korah, certain entities within the church are refusing to submit to God's delegated authority on earth.
- ❖ In Korah's day, Moses was God's appointed leader to delegate the authority of God.
- ❖ In our day, the GC in session, is God's delegated authority.

# Authority of GC

- ❖ Why is the General Conference in session the highest authority that God has on earth?
- ❖ Because God can more clearly reveal His will through the voice of the entire world field than He can through one church, one conference, one Union, or one Division
- ❖ In other words, He can more easily lead through “us” than through “me.”



# Biblical Submission

- ❖ Submission to authority acknowledges there may be times when submission is required when there is disagreement.
- ❖ Submission to authority is not really submission if we say “I will only submit if you can show me why I should agree.”
- ❖ Sometimes God does not have to explain why.

# Biblical Order of Authority

- ❖ Children submit to parents (Ephesians 6:1)
- ❖ Wife submits to husband (Ephesians 5:22)
- ❖ Husband is head of wife and submits to Christ and loves wife as Christ loves the Church (Ephesians 5:23-25)
- ❖ Men lead in the home and in the Church (Ephesian 5:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-5)

# Biblical Order of Authority

- ❖ Christ is the Head of the Church  
(Ephesians 5:23)
- ❖ Christ delegates authority in the Church to Overseers - i.e. Pastors and Elders (1 Peter 5:1, 2)
- ❖ The Church is to submit to Christ and His authority.
- ❖ And again, the highest authority on earth is the GC in session.

# Problem With Authority

- ❖ Many resist authority in the church
- ❖ Conscience over God's highest authority is the name of the game for many today.
- ❖ Lack of submission in the home and in the Church ultimately leads to lack of submission to Christ and His delegated authority.

# Reform vs. Rebellion

- ❖ Many WO Advocates compare themselves to Martin Luther.
- ❖ And they compare the GC to the Papacy
- ❖ They say true reformers are viewed as rebels.
- ❖ However, those who sincerely think they are advocates of reform are actually rebels when opposing God's delegated authority.

# Biblical Unity

- ❖ Many are calling for unity in the church. Unity in diversity etc.
- ❖ The **ONLY** way that unity happens is when all parties recognize and accept their role/place under rightful authority.

- ❖ Unity could have been brought about in heaven **ONLY** if Lucifer submitted to Christ's authority. There was **NO OTHER** way.
- ❖ The cry of "unity" while not submitting to rightful authority is really hypocritical.
- ❖ True unity will never occur if we resist being in our place in relation to the rightful authorities that God has placed in our lives.

# Where Are We Headed?

“Shortly before I sent out the testimonies regarding the efforts of the enemy to undermine the foundation of our faith through the dissemination of seductive theories, I had read an incident about a ship in a fog meeting an iceberg. For several nights I slept but little. I seemed to be bowed down as a cart beneath sheaves. One night a scene was clearly presented before me. A vessel was upon the waters, in a heavy fog. Suddenly the lookout cried, ‘Iceberg just ahead!’” (1SM 205.3)



# Meet the Iceberg!

“There, towering high above the ship, was a gigantic iceberg. An authoritative voice cried out, ‘Meet it!’ There was not a moment’s hesitation. It was a time for instant action. The engineer put on full steam, and the man at the wheel steered the ship straight into the iceberg. With a crash she struck the ice.”

“There was a fearful shock, and the iceberg broke into many pieces, falling with a noise like thunder to the deck. The passengers were violently shaken by the force of the collisions, but no lives were lost. The vessel was injured, but not beyond repair. She rebounded from the contact, trembling from stem to stern, like a living creature. Then she moved forward on her way.” (1SM 205.3)

# Time For Decided Action

“Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders. I had heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, ‘Meet it!’ I knew what my duty was, and that there was not a moment to lose. The time for decided action had come. I must without delay obey the command, ‘Meet it!’” (1SM 206.1)

# The Church Will Not Fall

“The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. **None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths.** We must be divested of our self-righteousness and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ.” (2SM 380.2)

“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.” (Ed 57.3)

# Final Appeal

- ❖ Stay With the Church
- ❖ Make Your Voice Heard
- ❖ We have too many silent members hiding in the caves like Obadiah's prophets
- ❖ Stand for the right though the heavens fall.
- ❖ Be part of the solution