

AFFIRMING WOMEN IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The October 2015 Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists recorded the following statement on behalf of its Administration:

“The vote taken in San Antonio does not change the Church’s understanding of the role of women in the life, mission and practice of the Church as supported by the *Church Manual* and outlined in General Conference and Division working policies.”

This statement gave assurance to women - in particular ministers and elders - who are called, gifted and committed to the service of our Church. It was also intended to discourage those who exploit the vote to hurt people and polarise the Church.

Leaders of the Trans-European Division affirm that:

We celebrate the tapestry of people in our territory, whose customs, culture and understanding, though diverse, have been woven throughout the Bible and Christian history, towards an appreciation of God’s inclusive grace.

We acknowledge that God appoints women and men to minister according to their spiritual gifts and education. He does this to fulfil His mission to share the ‘Good News’ to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

We encourage women to prepare for Church leadership and pastoral ministry.

We will create openings and opportunities, where women’s giftedness is valued, to the benefit of the whole Church.

We applaud the courage and dignity which women display in fulfilling their calling despite those who undermine them.

Furthermore, personal abuse and disruptive behaviour are un-Christian, and unacceptable, and will not be tolerated by Church leaders, who owe a duty of care to those who have been appointed to serve.

To this end:

Leaders of the Trans-European Division are committed to resolving differences through mutual respect, dialogue, thoughtful listening, heartfelt understanding, and submission to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who unites us.

We pray that we will be humbled to hear God’s voice in those through whom He speaks.

“Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.” 2 Corinthians 2:14-15

A Biblical Template:

We urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.

Be at peace among yourselves.

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,

in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-18