

1 TOSC/130-13GS/EOM/ADCOM/PreC/GCDO14AC/14AC to AAS-15GCS

2
3 123-14GS CONSENSUS STATEMENT ON A SEVENTH-DAY
4 ADVENTIST THEOLOGY OF ORDINATION

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6 VOTED, To receive and endorse the document, “Consensus Statement on a Seventh-day
7 Adventist Theology of Ordination,” which reads as follows:

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9 In a world alienated from God, the Church is composed of those whom God has
10 reconciled to Himself and to each other. Through the saving work of Christ they are united to
11 Him by faith through baptism (Eph 4:4-6), thus becoming a royal priesthood whose mission is to
12 “proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9,
13 NKJV). Believers are given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-20), called and enabled
14 through the power of the Spirit and the gifts He bestows on them to carry out the Gospel
15 Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

16
17 While all believers are called to use their spiritual gifts for ministry, the Scriptures
18 identify certain specific leadership positions that were accompanied by the Church’s public
19 endorsement for persons who meet the biblical qualifications (Num 11:16-17; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3;
20 14:23; 1 Tim 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-9). Several such endorsements are shown to involve “the laying
21 on of hands.” English versions of the Scriptures use the word *ordain* to translate many different
22 Greek and Hebrew words having the basic idea of *select* or *appoint* that describe the placement
23 of these persons in their respective offices. Over the course of Christian history the term
24 *ordination* has acquired meanings beyond what these words originally implied. Against such a
25 backdrop, Seventh-day Adventists understand ordination, in a biblical sense, as the action of the
26 Church in publicly recognizing those whom the Lord has called and equipped for local and
27 global Church ministry.

28
29 Aside from the unique role of the apostles, the New Testament identifies the following
30 categories of ordained leaders: the elder/supervising elder (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17, 28;
31 1 Tim 3:2-7; 4:14; 2 Tim 4:1-5; 1 Pet 5:1) and the deacon (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-10). While most
32 elders and deacons ministered in local settings, some elders were itinerant and supervised greater
33 territory with multiple congregations, which may reflect the ministry of individuals such as
34 Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 1:3-4; Titus 1:5).

35
36 In the act of ordination, the Church confers representative authority upon individuals for
37 the specific work of ministry to which they are appointed (Acts 6:1-3; 13:1-3; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus
38 2:15). These may include representing the Church; proclaiming the gospel; administering the
39 Lord’s Supper and baptism; planting and organizing churches; guiding and nurturing members;
40 opposing false teachings; and providing general service to the congregation (cf. Acts 6:3;
41 20:28-29; 1 Tim 3:2, 4-5; 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:2; 4:5; Titus 1:5, 9). While ordination contributes to
42 Church order, it neither conveys special qualities to the persons ordained nor introduces a kingly
43 hierarchy within the faith community. The biblical examples of ordination include the giving of a
44 charge, the laying on of hands, fasting and prayer, and committing those set apart to the grace of
45 God (Deut 3:28; Acts 6:6; 14:26; 15:40).

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1 Ordained individuals dedicate their talents to the Lord and to His Church for a lifetime of
2 service. The foundational model of ordination is Jesus appointing the twelve apostles
3 (Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16), and the ultimate model of Christian ministry is the
4 life and work of our Lord, who came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45; Luke 22:25-27;
5 John 13:1-17).