

A YouTube video titled “Adventist Government, Women Ordination, Marriage in Heaven and More | Ask Pastor Mark Live” was posted by HopeLives365 on 8/12/23. Mat Gray is the host and Mark Finley is the oracle.

The first question for Mark, at 2:06 is, “Can you explain the Adventist government to us, ah, you know if there’s some problem in a church, for example, ah, may a pastor that’s doing something or maybe, um, some outside source, some problem happening there, what are the different, you know, we’ve got conferences, we’ve got unions, we’ve got the General Conference; how does everybody play, ah, what are the rules, in, in, am, a problem and, ahn, how they solve it?”

Mark says, “Matt that’s a very practical and very good question. Um, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we have a constituent basis for our governmental structure. It’s really based on Scripture where Moses had a decentralized approach to solving problems. Remember it was thousands, hundreds, the twelves, et cetera. And so in the Seventh-day Adventist Church there are four basic levels of church administration and church governance. First you have your local church, the local church is governed by a local church board. Problems within the local church are to be handled by that church board. Then each church, local church is a part of a larger structure called the conference. Uh, in our church structure, the physical facility of the local church is owned by the conference, not the members of the church. I’m talking about the physical plant, the building. Why? Because let’s suppose that you had a renegade, rebellious pastor or congregation that wanted to take that whole church out of the orbit of Seventh-day Adventist teachings and theology. Um, then the conference owns the building so they couldn’t take the building with them. Um, the local conference is responsible for churches within that state conference.” Mark goes on to say that the Unions support conferences and then there are Divisions of the General Conference.

At 4:27 Mark says, “The responsibility of the conference is to minister to, support, encourage, local conf; local churches. The tithe from the local church goes on to the conference. The conference then uses that tithe to pay the pastors.” Actually, though the tithe is supposed to be used to pay the pastors, in at least three other conferences I’m aware of, the tithe is used for quite a few other things.

At 35:33, Mark says we should “stand for biblical values at whatever cost.” I agree.

At 46:45 Mark tackles the question of the ordination of women as pastors. He thinks it’s a good question. He says, “Now when it comes to women’s ordination, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, ah, in session, has voted, um, on three separate occasions on this instance and, uh, in those votes they have chosen not to move ahead with women’s ordination into the pastoral ministry. Um, we have not taken that vote uh, in fac, on women being elders in local churches. In fact, um, uh, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has, um, has opened that door. So whatever you and I think about that subject, whatever you and I think about it, I think there are for three things. One, the question of women’s ordination to the pastoral ministry is an issue that the General Conference in session has voted upon and therefore as part of the world body of churches, to promote the unity of the church, as a cohesive body, we accept that vote. That’s one. Two, that we do have women in leadership. We can encourage females in leadership position as their gifts and talents enable them to fill the unique position which they are prepared

for. And three, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, has not voted that, ah, women cannot serve as local elders in the local churches. That's up to the local church. Frankly there are some churches that accept that, some churches that do not. It's not worth splitting the church over."

Did you remember where Mark talked about church organization being based on "Scripture?" Do you remember where Mark said we should "stand for biblical values at whatever cost." Do you see anything about any Scripture being called upon to countenance the ordination of women pastors and elders? That's because there is no Scripture that says that. Scripture clearly says, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" in 1 Timothy 2:5 and in Titus 1:6 says elders are to be "the husband of one wife."

The fact is that multiple conferences employ women pastors even though it was voted down THREE TIMES by the General Conference in session. Sometimes they call the woman who can baptize and preach "commissioned" instead of "ordained" to confuse the issue. Mark doesn't think the issue is worth splitting the church over. Well, if the church is being split over this, the fault lies with those who aid and abet women in holding the unbiblical and illegitimate office of pastor or elder.

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