

2014

## Theology or Culture? A Closer Look at the Issues Driving the Current Debate over Ordination Without Regard to Gender in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church [Dissertation Notice]

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### Recommended Citation

Davis, H. Allen Jr. (2014) "Theology or Culture? A Closer Look at the Issues Driving the Current Debate over Ordination Without Regard to Gender in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church [Dissertation Notice]," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*: Vol. 8: No. 2, 110-110.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol8/iss2/16>

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## DISSERTATION NOTICES

**Adams, Anthony Wayne (2013).** *Shepherd leadership of Church of God pastors and how this relates to ministerial effectiveness.* D.M., University of Phoenix.

A shepherd's responsibility is to care for and guide sheep in such a way that they (sheep) can effectively and proficiently perform the duties that are natural and necessary to sheep. The same is true with leaders and managers as it relates to their followers. This quantitative correlational research study was conducted to discover whether the biblical shepherd leadership model, particularly its characteristics, practices, and responsibilities (CPR), were related to successful church growth. A 45-item Likert-type survey was used to ascertain the level of shepherd leadership of 106 pastors in the Church of God in Michigan. This score was then compared with statistical information found in the treasurers' and ministry reports—namely, attendance, tithe, and conversions that took place at these pastors' local churches within a five-year period. The results of the study showed a statistical positive association between shepherd leadership and the attendance and financial data. The data also showed a negative association between shepherd leadership and conversions. These findings will be helpful to pastors, educators, and church leaders seeking to be more effective in ministry.

**Davis, H. Allen, Jr. (2013).** *Theology or culture? A closer look at the issues driving the current debate over ordination without regard to gender in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.* Ph.D., Regent University.

This study examined the influence of culture and theology on the question of ordination of women to the Gospel ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Of the 13 divisions within the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, three have unions and conferences that have acted counter to the 1990 policy, which states that only men are to receive the appointment of ordained pastoral leadership (Advocate, 2012). This friction point has sparked disunity that has the potential of splitting the church. Because the divergent divisions are of the Anglo-Germanic cluster of national cultures, this study sought to resolve the following questions: Have cultural norms influenced the Anglo-Germanic cluster's departure from General Conference policy? What are the reasons that 10 of the church's divisions have adhered to General Conference policy while three have not? Are they cultural or theological?

To address these inquiries, nine open-ended questions were extracted from the literature to conduct a phenomenological study upon a targeted sampling of 11 church leaders and lay leaders within eight of the world church's 13 divisions. This study used HyperRESEARCH to analyze the data and to understand themes. Analysis and interpretation of data gathered showed that culture was the driving factor behind the Anglo-Germanic divisions acting contrary to world church policy as well as the compliance of the other divisions.