

ADVENTIST NEWS

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Andrews Theologians Approve Statement on Headship

The statement emphasizes the equality of men and women as members of the body of Christ.

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The faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University has voted a statement on Biblical concepts of headship, the university said Friday.

Teachers at the church's main North American training ground for pastors adopted a seven-page study titled, "On the Unique Headship of Christ in the Church."

The document, approved Thursday, "represents a consensus of the seminary faculty who created this document as a service to the worldwide church," the university said in a statement.

"I am excited to offer to the church this biblical-theological study that uplifts the unique headship of Christ in the church," seminary dean Jiří Moskala said. "It is my hope that it will significantly contribute to the current debates on leadership."

The [document opens](#) by unequivocally declaring that the church's head, or leader, is no one other than Christ.

"While there exists legitimate leadership in the church, no other human being may rightfully claim a headship role in the church," it says. "As head of the church, Christ provides the ultimate manifestation of God's love, demonstrating and vindicating God's moral government of love, and thus defeating the counterfeit government of the usurping 'ruler of this world.'"

Later, the statement addresses Biblical understandings of the roles of men and women,

"Since Christ is the unique Husband of the church (Christ's metaphorical bride), the members of the church cannot themselves be husbands of the church but collectively, men and women together, are the bride of Christ," it says.

The statement makes no mention of women's ordination, a divisive issue among some church members that faces a possible vote by the world church at a General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas, in July 2015.

The statement does affirm that God created man and woman equal in the Garden of Eden, and it says that God desires to restore that equality.

"Although various interpretations of Gen 3:16 have recognized some kind of post-Fall disruption of this pre-Fall egalitarian ideal, the Bible consistently calls us back to God's original plan for full equality without hierarchy (Song 7:10; Isa 65:17, 25; cf. Gen 1:29-30)," the statement says.

“Paul’s writings, though often misunderstood (2 Pet 3:16), maintain this Eden model (Eph 5:21-23), affirming with the rest of Scripture the Gospel ideal of the ultimate restoration of the Eden model (cf. Matt 19:8; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 3:28).

“Ellen White also underlines this redemptive paradigm: ‘Woman should fill the position which God originally designed for her, as her husband’s equal, (AH 231),” it says.

Moskala said he hoped the Andrews statement would help end some divisions among church members.

“I pray that this document will prove to be a unifying influence in the church,” he said.

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Related link

[Andrews University statement “On the Unique Headship of Christ in the Church”](#)

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