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# WAA Woman's Place

Seventh-day  
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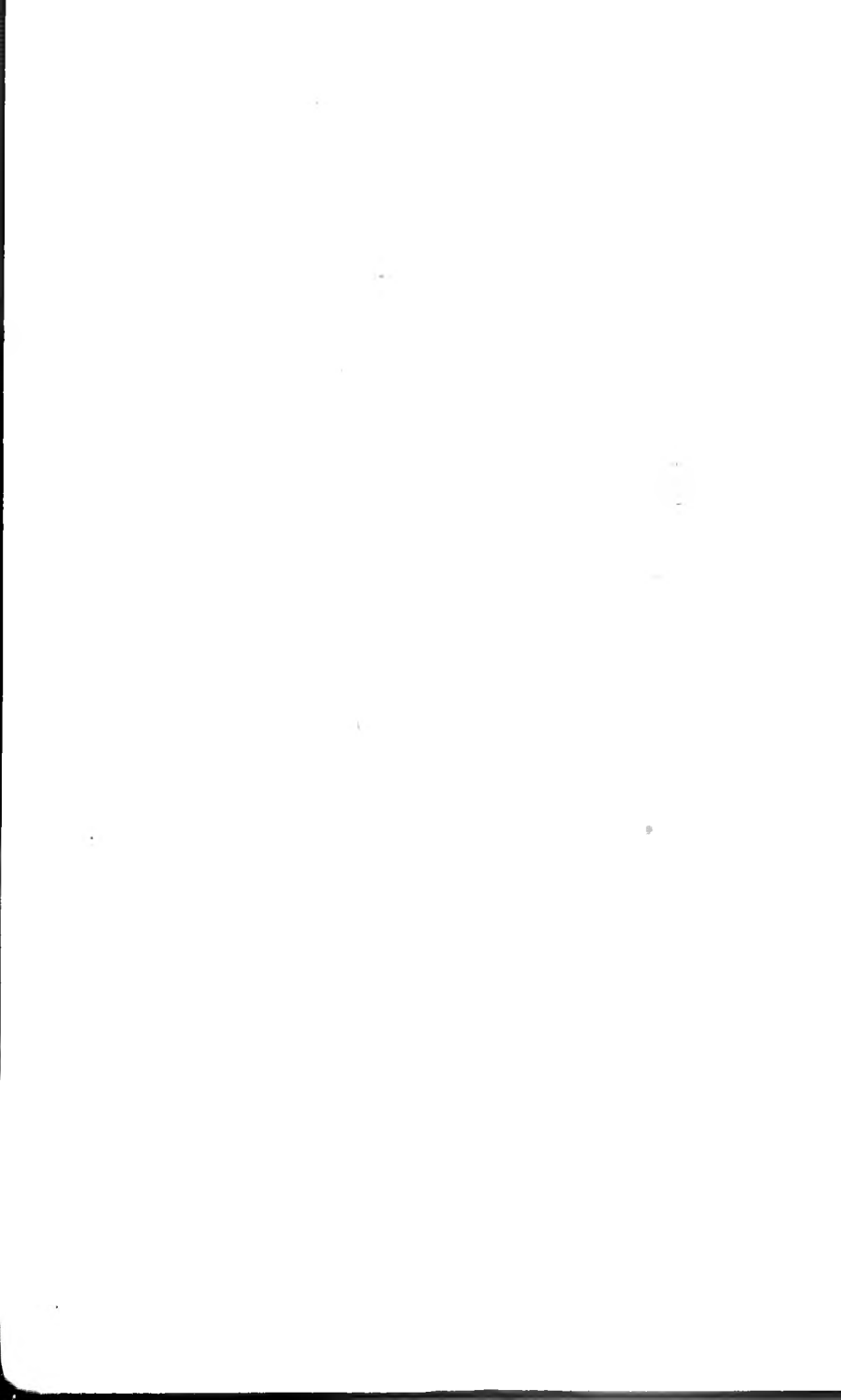
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# **WA Woman's Place**



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 Seventh-day  
Adventist  
Women in  
Church and  
Society

Rosa Taylor Banks  
Editor



REVIEW AND HERALD® PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION  
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# Foreword:

## Adventist Women of Hope

Elizabeth Sterndale

You hold in your hands a book written by women of hope—women who know that without hope, faith and love cannot exist. They have written this book because they believe that reasonable persons, participating in thoughtful discussion, can effect change where change is needed. Allow the messages of these pages to take root in your thinking and bear fruit in your heart.

The North American Division Women's Commission had a great desire that the research and experiences of these pages be made available to the church family. Allow the authors' messages to be understood.


Enjoy this book—let it enlighten you and release you from prejudices.

Learn from this book and be committed to action to make our church an even better environment and a better place in which women may find fulfillment in their work for the Lord.

Finally, recommend this book to others who wish to see every earthly means joined with heavenly blessings and the power of the Holy Spirit to the finishing of His work on this planet.

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Elizabeth Sterndale is a field secretary and director of Women's Ministries of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland. She is a registered nurse and holds an M.S. degree in psychiatric nursing from the University of Maryland.



## Introduction:

# Adventist Women—Achievers, Too!

Rosa Taylor Banks, Ed.D., L.H.D.

In 1983 the Office of Human Relations (OHR) introduced a document before the delegates of the Annual Council of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that, when voted, would assist the North American Division (NAD) in nurturing and mobilizing its female membership for greater service to the church and its mission. The action of the council established a Women's Commission and assigned its coordination to the Office of Human Relations.

The OHR gave leadership to the Women's Commission for eight years, during which time unions, local conferences, and churches established "commissioners" to direct this work on these levels. In 1990 the commission gave birth to the Office of Women's Ministries at the North American Division, and Elizabeth Sterndale was elected director. Shortly thereafter, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists established an Office of Women's Ministries, and Rose Otis was elected director.

What has taken place over its short period of growth has greatly influenced the role of Seventh-day Adventist women in church and society. Women are being nurtured and mobilized as never before. Felt needs are being addressed, and mighty works are continuing to be wrought by women who are in touch with divine power, which enables male and female to find true partnership in Christ. To be in partnership with our Divine Master is an inestimable privilege that results in a transforming power, the evidence of which cannot be disputed or denied. This kind of fellowship is a grave responsibility in Christ's service.

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Rosa Taylor Banks is the associate secretary of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, and director of the Office of Human Relations, Silver Spring, Maryland. She has an Ed.D. in Business and Higher Education Administration from the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and an L.H.D. from Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Women in the North American Division are to be found in the United States, Canada, Bermuda, Johnston Island, St. Pierre, and Miquelon. Numbering more than 450,000, they consistently represent more than 60 percent of the division's membership. There is no question that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has an unparalleled and unprecedented opportunity today to tap this huge reservoir of diverse gifts and talents. It is clear that our challenge is not only to recognize these gifts, but to actually use them to bring new and richer perspectives to our church's mission.

The Office of Human Relations is privileged to produce this first book for, by, and about women in Adventism. Fourteen writers have worked arduously to bring this project to fruition. Additionally, many others have contributed in numerous ways—women who, all together, have accumulated volumes of wisdom and information that are a tremendous resource for the church.

This book looks historically at changing relationships between the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an institution and its female membership. We begin and end with powerful and resourceful chapters. Chapter 1, by Beatrice Neall, and chapter 10, by Iris Yob, assess the principles and arguments on both sides of the question of women—Neall from the perspective of theology, and Yob from the perspective of psychology and sociology.

In chapter 2 Kit Watts discusses the contributions of women during the years of Ellen G. White, prophetess and special messenger to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She gives us a glimpse into the lives of these faithful women servants and makes the point that women have always been involved in the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As the chronology shifts from the period of Ellen White to the decades following her death (Dasher, chapter 3) to the present situation (Perez-Greek, chapter 4), the reader senses an early energy that must be vigorously maintained in the latter days of this earth's history.

The material by Habada and Rumble (chapter 5) looks at

an area in which women have always been active, noting their tremendous achievements in education.

The controversial role of women in the Adventist Church today and the efforts to justify the opposing views about their role can be better understood in the context of profound changes that have taken place in the home and family. Although there is a felt need for adequate research on the Adventist family, Kuzma and Jones-Haldeman (chapters 6 and 7, respectively) share with us the historical changes that have taken place in the marriage and family institution and several factors that have affected those changes. Kuzma shares from a family matters perspective, while Jones-Haldeman takes the theological view and focuses on family structures.

Chapter 8, written by Harris, is a resource for women wanting hands-on information that will stir them into action at the levels where they render service. It is a source of encouragement to women of all races and ages to reach out to one another as they face the overwhelming challenges of daily living.

Shell, in chapter 9, talks about how society effects social changes in today's church and addresses its similarity to the American family in general. Chapter 10, written by Yob, has already been commented upon.

It is my belief that the women who participated in the production of this book have a genuine love for their church as a community within which their beliefs and their friendships have shaped their lives. They are women who see God's Spirit moving throughout the church in tremendous ways, and they rejoice that God is calling them, too, to share in this great work of kingdom building. I believe these women care about other women, and even more about the young women whose lives will be affected by what happens now and in the future inside the church structure.

It must be stated that the views expressed throughout this book are those of the authors, and as such, may or may not be shared by the Office of Human Relations, the Office of Women's Ministries, or the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The validity of the research, including its references, rests solely with the respective author and not the Office of Human Relations or the body it represents.

Further, the issues addressed by these women do not exhaust the topics of interest to Adventist women worldwide. At best, as a publication focusing largely upon the achievements of women of the North American Division, it is only a beginning. Under different time restraints, the book would be larger and would chronicle the attainments of many more women who have made significant contributions to the church and society in the divisions and attached fields that make up the Seventh-day Adventist world church. It would include more topics of interest to younger women, who must be encouraged to move on to much greater heights. Undoubtedly, a second project of this nature might be done differently. This is our contribution at this time.

Finally, the topics and experiences presented here out of the vast reservoir of Adventist female achievers indicate that where the doors of opportunity are opened to allow Christian women to enter and participate, the church will be the beneficiary.

## CHAPTER 1

# A Theology of Woman

BEATRICE S. NEALL, PH.D

Once I attended a Christian seminar that stressed the subjection of women in a "chain of command." A wife should put herself under her husband's umbrella even if it leaked, we were told. God would honor her obedience even if her husband were wrong, just as He rescued Sarah from Abraham's mistake.

I thought this a romantic view that might be fun to try, especially since it relieved me of responsibility. But when I checked out Ellen White's position on the matter, I was shocked out of all my romantic ideas. She stated forcefully that each person is accountable to God, that no one should merge her individuality in that of another,<sup>1</sup> that the abuse of male supremacy has often made the lot of women bitter,<sup>2</sup> and that husbands should treat wives as equals, the way they were created to be,<sup>3</sup> not quoting Scripture to defend their headship.<sup>4</sup> It soon became clear that our favorite author did not support the "chain of command" view of the role of women!

Immediately I was faced with the problem that that seminar leader and Ellen White were using Scripture differ-

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Beatrice Neall is a professor of religion at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. She has a Ph.D. in religious education from Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

ently. Which one should I believe? Abraham Lincoln observed that the North and South both read the same Bible and prayed to the same God, yet came to opposite conclusions about the issue of slavery. Christians today are similarly divided over the issue of the role of women. How to interpret the Bible and apply it to our day is a critical issue.

### **Interpreting and Applying Scripture**

Some say, "You don't have to interpret the Bible—just do what it says!" Yet not all Scripture has equal weight. Not even the most conservative Christian would stone a rebellious son, though Deuteronomy 21:21 gives such a command. Because the Bible was written in ancient languages to people of ancient times and cultures, there is no way to avoid the task of interpreting it.

The first step must be to understand what the text meant when it was written. This task, called exegesis, is the attempt to determine the original intent of the writer and to hear the Word as the original recipients heard it. It is important to discover the circumstances the writer was dealing with. There are often clues in the book itself or in other writings by the same author. Why, for instance, did Paul command women to be silent in church (1 Cor. 14:34)? Was there a special problem he was facing?

After we do our best to determine what the writer of the text was saying to his original readers, we need to apply the text to our own time. What is God's Word saying to us today? This process is called hermeneutics (though the term is often applied to the whole process of interpretation). Do Jesus' words to the rich young ruler, "Sell all that you have and give to the poor," apply to every reader? As we read the Word to hear the voice of God to us today, it is not always possible to relate the text directly to ourselves.

Even in our use of Ellen White's writings, we have been taught to "consider the time and place." Her counsel of the 1860s that skirts should be shortened would be disastrous when many wear miniskirts! When a specific counsel is not directly applicable, one should look for the underlying prin-



principle. Ellen White's concern was for health and modesty. Is Paul's statement "I permit no woman to teach" (1 Tim. 2:12)\* a universal command or a counsel for a specific situation? Here is a task for hermeneutics.<sup>5</sup>

Other general principles are useful in interpreting Scripture. Seventh-day Adventists have a valuable tool in applying Scripture to our day, the writings of Ellen White. Her interpretation of Paul's texts on women will be vital to this study.

Another principle dear to Adventists as reformers is that the pre-Fall state is the ideal to set before men and women today. Certain practices such as slavery, polygamy, meat eating, and use of alcoholic beverages, while common in Scripture and not specifically forbidden, do not represent God's ideal for humanity. Typically, the Adventist mission is to call the world "back to Eden." The Eden ideal is important for the role and status of women.

Jesus, as the supreme revelation of God, is the supreme example of how human beings should relate to each other. In the study of the role of women, Jesus' example should carry the greatest weight.

When looking for guidance from Scripture in contemporary issues that don't quite match the biblical data, we usually look for biblical precedents. Should these be applied rigidly? How did Jesus apply Scripture? Which did He value more, law and precedent, or the welfare of people?

And what should be done if Scripture is silent on an issue? It is often necessary to look at the "trajectory" of Scripture. If one can see the direction a missile is pointed and calculate its velocity, one can predict where it will land. On the issue of slavery, the Bible assumes its existence and gives no command to abolish it (Paul even tells slaves to obey their masters); but the biblical principles of brotherhood, the dignity of humanity, and the freedom to choose, and the need to develop one's gifts, lead in the direction of abolition. In the study of the role of women, as of slavery, it is necessary to determine the trajectory of Scripture.<sup>6</sup>

As a check upon our interpretation of Scripture, we need

to ask the question "What is God actually doing?" Is He acting in harmony with our understanding of Scripture, or does He refuse to be boxed in? Peter believed on scriptural grounds that Jews should not associate with Gentiles (see Lev. 20:26 and Neh. 9:2) and that Gentiles could not be saved without first becoming Jews. The Holy Spirit demolished his theology by acting contrary to his expectations (Acts 10:28, 44, 45). God was moving, and Peter had to learn to move with Him.

How is God moving today? Does He use women to teach, to lead, to exercise authority? The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that God called a woman to be His messenger in these last days. God's actions should be a check on our interpretation of Scripture.

### Woman as God Created Her

What did God create when He made woman? Something less than man because she was created after him, from him, and for him? Something higher than man because she was the climax and crown of Creation? Something equal to man because she was taken from his side? There is a wealth of meaning in the simple account of Genesis 1:26, 27: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Since man is in the image of God, it is necessary to discover what God is like. The text indicates that He is not a lone being, but a union of more than one. God (Heb. *Elohim*, plural form) says, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness."<sup>7</sup> Here is conversation between the members of the Godhead—three persons, working together in harmony.<sup>8</sup> What does it mean, then, when God says, "Let *us* make man in *our* image"? The next verse explains: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; *male and female* he created *them*" (Gen. 1:27).

Man as *male and female* constitutes the image of God.

God-in-relationship created man-in-relationship. *Man* (Heb. *adam*) means "them." As God is a fellowship of three beings who live in a love relationship, male and female and child are to live in a love relationship. At creation male and female form a unity. It is that unity that mirrors God's likeness.<sup>9</sup>

Genesis 5:1, 2 enriches this concept: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man [adam], he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man [Adam] when they were created."

Some have thought that the male *adam* was in the image of God whereas the female *adam* was in the image of the male, hence, inferior to him. The text indicates quite otherwise: Man as the image of God is both male and female. Though male was the first human formed (Gen. 2:7), he was not the perfect creature God had in mind. God's evaluation was "It is not good for the man to be alone" (verse 18, NIV). Only with the creation of woman does man become complete and "good."

While most of us recognize that God is not a sexual being, we usually think of Him as male because He is our Father, King, and Bridegroom. Yet a careful study of the Bible reveals that God often uses feminine figures to describe His personality and actions. He compares Himself to a woman in childbirth (Deut. 32:18; Isa. 42:14), or a nursing mother (Isa. 49:15). The name *El-Shaddai* literally means "God, my breasts"—that is, God the source of my nourishment and comfort.<sup>10</sup> God's divine compassion is expressed by a form of the Hebrew word for womb, the place of protection and care where God carries His people.<sup>11</sup> God also compares Himself to a mother eagle or a mother hen caring for her young (Deut. 32:11, 12; Matt. 23:37).<sup>12</sup> Since God describes Himself by male and female attributes, it takes both male and female to image Him.

The task of subduing the world and ruling over earth, sea, and sky was laid upon both man and woman (Gen. 1:26, 28). Rulership and authority are commanded for both. For one to rule alone would be to disobey God's commands.

The creation account of Genesis 1 indicates that both man and woman were created in the image of God to have dominion over the earth. There is no evidence that one was superior to the other. They were created equal.

Genesis 2 narrates the story of the creation of man and woman in greater detail. God created the man first and gave him the task of naming the animals to arouse in him a sense of loneliness and need—in all creation “there was not found a helper fit for him” (verse 20). So God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (verse 18, NIV). Some have concluded from the word “helper” (Hebrew, *ezer*) that the woman was inferior to the man—his servant. But in the divine reckoning, service is a mark of honor (e.g., Matt. 23:11). The Old Testament repeatedly refers to God as our “help” (*ezer*) in time of need.<sup>13</sup>

Also, the word “suitable” is significant in Hebrew. Literally it means “as if in front of him” [the man]—“I will make a helper as if in front of him.”<sup>14</sup> If woman had been created in an inferior position, the writer should have used a preposition meaning “after” or “behind.” The text indicates that there is no subordination of the helper to Adam. Rather, God created woman to be “in front of” Adam, which would symbolize equality (if not superiority!) in all respects.<sup>15</sup>

Neither man nor woman was spoken into existence—both were formed by God Himself, Adam from the dust of the earth, Eve from something much nobler—the rib of Adam. The creation of woman from the rib of man does not imply a position of subordination on her part, but that she was made to stand by his side as his equal, his companion, his “helper suitable for him.”

But there is a much deeper meaning in the manner of Eve's creation. Husband and wife were *created* one flesh (“bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”) and then told to *become* one flesh (“A man . . . cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” [Gen. 2:23, 24]). The unity of substance was to be constantly nurtured by an even closer unity of relationship. Though it is possible to argue the priority of one

over the other by reason of the order of creation (the male because he was created first [1 Tim. 2:13], or the female because the higher creations came last), the spirit of rivalry for highest place is foreign to the spirit of the Creation narratives. Man and woman in their pristine splendor both had ample reason to admire and adore each other.

Whether the man or the woman was created superior to the other is ambiguous in Genesis, depending upon how the data are interpreted. Following is a summary of both sides of the question:

The Man Is Exalted	The Woman Is Exalted
1. The man was created first.	1. The higher creations came last.
2. Woman was derived from man, hence is inferior.	2. Woman had a higher origin than man, who came from dust.
3. Woman was a helper for man.	3. "Helper" indicated high status.
	4. Woman was to be "in front of" the man.

It is more likely that man and woman were created to be equal, though differing in function and role.<sup>16</sup> The only time it becomes necessary to mention the arguments for superiority is when one sex loses its respect for the other. Then the Genesis story yields evidence in both directions.

### The Fall and the Curse

The entrance of sin brought tragic changes to the human family. God's original commands to the man and woman were altered. At Creation man and woman were commanded to have dominion over the earth. Now the man was to rule over his wife. They were to be fruitful and multiply. Now the woman's part in procreation was to be accompanied by pain and sorrow. The man was to till and dress the garden. Now he must fight the ground to support his life from it.

Commentators have tried to discover some mitigating

factors in the dismal picture of Genesis 3. First, women as a whole were not subjected to men as a whole, but only wives to their own husbands. The hierarchy existed only within the marriage relationship. Second, in the statement "he shall rule over you" (verse 16), the word for rule (*mashal*) was not as strong as the word used for ruling the animal kingdom (*radah*) in Genesis 1:28. Third, the New Testament turns the concept of ruling into serving, of which we shall say more later.

How should the church today relate to the Fall and its results? Are the pronouncements of Genesis 3 God's command for the human race? Or are they a description of the results of sin? Is "the curse" prescriptive or descriptive? Is it the mission of Christ and the church to perpetuate the results of sin or to redeem the race from the curse?

The sentence of Genesis 3 is death. Is it permissible to try to extend or enhance life? The sentence of Genesis 3 is toil and sweat. Is it permissible to invent ways to lighten work and avoid sweat? The sentence of Genesis 3 is pain in childbirth. Is it permissible to find ways to reduce or eliminate such pain? The sentence of Genesis 3 is subjection of the wife to the husband. Is it permissible to find a better method of living in harmony?

The answer is unequivocal. Jesus came to take away the curse. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13, NIV). "He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found."

### Women in the Old Testament

After the Fall man's abuse of his powers debased womanhood. Women were reduced in some societies to little more than goods and chattel—property owned by the man as he owned a house, land, animals, and slaves. Monogamy changed to polygamy, and easy divorce of wives by their husbands added to the suffering of women. The patriarchal structure of society placed a woman under the authority of men all her life, first under her father, then her husband, and if he died, her husband's brother. Men were dominant, as

reflected in social, religious, and legal affairs.

Hebrew women generally fared better than women in the rest of the Near East, as is shown by a comparative study of Semitic laws. The Israelite woman was a member of the covenant community, though lacking the external sign of circumcision. Marriage and the bearing of children were essential functions of her life. While some laws treated men and women as equals (both adulterer and adulteress were to be put to death (Lev. 20:10); mother and father were to be revered (19:3), women were considered less valuable than men (Lev. 27:2-7), and daughters less desirable than sons (12:1-5). The tenth commandment identifies a wife as property (Ex. 20:17).

Even in that patriarchal society, however, women at times were leaders. There were female prophets such as Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), and Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3). Women such as Ruth and Esther became national heroes. Yet the Bible stories are predominantly about men.<sup>17</sup>

### Jesus and Women

Judaism in Jesus' day had a prayer that went like this:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
who hast not made me a heathen.

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
who hast not made me a bondman.

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
who hast not made me a woman.

Men looked upon women not only as being inferior and foolish, but as a source of temptation to be shunned. Into such a social environment Jesus was born and lived. Yet He never looked down on women or spoke of them as being inferior.

Although numerous rabbinical parables have been preserved, women seldom appear in them, or if they do, they appear in a bad light. But in His teaching, Jesus spoke often

of women. He compared the kingdom of God to a woman making bread (Matt. 13:33); He likened God to a woman looking for a lost coin (Luke 15:8-10); He spoke of 10 virgins (Matt. 25:1-13); and of a persistent widow pleading for justice (Luke 18:1-8). He also praised a poor widow who dropped all her money into the offering box (Mark 12:41-44).

The Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" (Matt. 19:3) to see which rabbinic school He would side with, that of Shammai, who believed only moral failure was a reason for divorce, or that of Hillel, who allowed divorce on the most trivial grounds, such as burning food or putting too much salt in the soup.

In His reply Jesus upheld the marriage institution by pointing to the ideal state at Creation: "A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one" (Mark 10:7, 8). And He added, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (verse 9). In not allowing men to divorce their wives, Jesus placed the wife on a level equal to the husband. He had no double standard.<sup>18</sup>

Jesus raised some eyebrows the day He associated with the woman of Samaria. The Jews regarded Samaritans not only as enemies, but as unclean. Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus said, "Eating Samaritan bread is like eating swine's flesh." And the Mishnah said, "The daughters of the Samaritans are menstruants from their cradle." This meant that not only was the Samaritan woman unclean, but everything she handled—including her waterpot. To make matters worse, she was morally polluted as well. Yet Jesus asked for her water, brought salvation to her, and visited her village.

The rabbis had a saying, "A man shall not talk with a woman in the street, not even with his own wife . . . on account of what men may say." But Jesus spoke to women publicly in defiance of Jewish custom, comforting a widow in a funeral procession (Luke 7:13), demanding to meet the unclean woman who had touched Him in the crowd (Luke 8:45), and touching and healing a hunchbacked woman in



the synagogue (Luke 13:13). Jesus favored free association between the sexes. The answer to immorality was not for women to seclude themselves but for men to control their thoughts (Matt. 5:28).

In Judaism women were generally not allowed the privilege of studying under a rabbi. "Some of them may have been taught by their fathers or their husbands at home to read the Bible, but since this involved the learning of the ancient Hebrew language, it is probable that such cases were rare."<sup>19</sup> Some rabbis strongly opposed efforts to teach women. According to an old tradition, "If a man gives his daughter a knowledge of the Law, it is as though he taught her lechery."<sup>20</sup> She might become active in public life and liable to seduction.

Jesus favored the instruction of women. When He visited Mary and Martha's home in Bethany, Mary took a place at His feet—the customary position of a learner with a rabbi (as Paul was instructed at the feet of Gamaliel). Though Jewish women were exempt from learning the law, and though Martha needed Mary's help in the kitchen—women's traditional domain—Jesus defended Mary's right to learn. He would not allow Martha or tradition to stop Mary from learning as His male disciples did.<sup>21</sup>

Though Jesus respected women and was not afraid to ignore the conventions of His day, He did not choose women to be among the 12 disciples. Does this indicate that it is not His will for women to be ordained to the ministry? As the founder of the new spiritual Israel, Jesus chose 12 men to correspond to the 12 sons of Jacob. Women would not have fit the model He had in mind. Yet Jesus did have a group of female disciples who were with Him all during His ministry, from early Galilean tours until the closing events of His life.

"And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene . . . and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means" (Luke 8:1-3).

These women were with Jesus through His crucifixion

(Matt. 27:55, 56; Mark 15:40, 41), burial (Matt. 27:61), and resurrection (Matt. 28:1; John 20:1, 2, 11-18). They stayed by Him when the men forsook Him and fled. They were present at the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:13, 14). They fit the criteria for discipleship listed by Peter, except that they were not men (verses 21, 22).

Jesus originally chose 12 men, whom He named apostles (Luke 6:12-16), and sent them out with power to heal and cast out devils (Luke 9:1-6). He later commissioned 70, whom He sent out two by two with the same power (Luke 10:1-12). It is reasonable to assume that among the 70 were the women disciples who had previously joined themselves to the group during Jesus' Galilean ministry (Luke 8:1-3). At Pentecost the number had increased to 120. These received the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit that had been promised, of which the earlier experiences were a token (Luke 3:16).

The Gospels give no technical term for ordination (Jesus made, chose, or appointed the 12 and the 70). The empowering each time was the fullest evidence of ordination. Peter in his Pentecost sermon emphasized the importance of the Spirit's descent upon the women:

"I will pour out my Spirit upon *all* flesh,  
and your sons *and your daughters* shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams;  
yea, and on my menservants *and my maidservants* in  
those days

I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy"  
(Acts 2:17, 18, quoting from Joel 2:28, 29).

This text, long a favorite of Seventh-day Adventists in defending the call of Ellen White, asserts that the gift of the Spirit in the last days is universal (*all* flesh): there is no sex discrimination (sons and daughters) or age discrimination (young men and old men) or class discrimination (menservants and maidservants). Here is a clear example of New Testament empowering of women for the proclamation of the gospel.

Paul based his claim to apostleship on the grounds that

the risen Christ had appeared to him (1 Cor. 15:4-9). Interestingly, in his list of those to whom Jesus appeared, he omits the women, though they were the first believing witnesses of the Resurrection: "He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time . . . Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (1 Cor. 15:5-8).

In the manner of his day, Paul mentioned only men as being significant witnesses of the Resurrection. At that time a woman was not allowed to testify, because it was concluded from Genesis 18:15 that she might be a liar.<sup>22</sup> Jesus did not evaluate people in that way. Even though the disciples did not believe His witnesses (Luke 24:10, 11, 22-24), Jesus gave the most stupendous message of history—the news that He had risen—to women. Women were a mighty force in the rapid spread of Christianity over the world. Who is to say they were not apostles?

### Women in the New Testament Church

What difference did Jesus make in the lives and roles of women? In the New Testament church we see profound changes in male/female relationships brought about by the gospel. Women were emancipated to serve and lead out in proclaiming the good news.

There are three categories of texts dealing with women in the New Testament.<sup>23</sup> The first could be called *prescriptive*, because the texts prescribe or mandate "the way things are to be." The second is *descriptive*—the texts describe what was actually going on in the New Testament churches. The third category is called *corrective*; for example, the texts telling how Paul corrected certain abuses that had crept into the church.

**Prescriptive Texts.** At Pentecost the Holy Spirit introduced new power and freedom in the proclamation of the gospel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on *all* people. Your *sons* and *daughters* will prophesy, your *young* men will see visions, your *old* men will dream dreams.

Even on my *servants*, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:17, 18, NIV).

In his famous Pentecost sermon, Peter announced that a new order had been introduced—the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of the last days. Instead of only the leaders having the Spirit and prophesying as in Moses' day (Num. 11:24-30), all God's people could receive the Spirit and prophesy. The word "all" means women as well as men, young as well as old, slave as well as free. The work of proclaiming the gospel would be open to all classes of people.

Paul was as emphatic as Peter about the great change the gospel made in male/female relationships: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

This proclamation rebukes the prevailing prejudice of those who thanked God they were not Gentiles, slaves, or women. Such pride had died in Christian baptism (see verse 26), from which one rises with a new identity transcending race, social status, and sex.

Some try to weaken this great declaration by limiting it to one's standing before God in matters of salvation. But Paul indicated that he was concerned about social as well as spiritual equality. In the same letter he roundly rebuked Peter for practicing social discrimination against Gentiles (Gal. 2:11, 12). He made it plain that in Christ there are neither sexual, racial, nor social distinctions.

Paul's understanding of the marriage relationship was also profoundly affected by the new freedom in Christ: "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control" (1 Cor. 7:3-5).

Here Paul declares that Christian marriage involves complete mutuality. The old male dominance of woman and female manipulation of man are replaced by consideration for the wishes of the other. Paul's statement "there is neither male nor female" does not eliminate sexuality, as some were teaching (1 Tim. 4:3), but affirms it. What it eliminates is the chain-of-command mentality common to the patriarchal societies of the day.

In the same chapter Paul affirms singleness as a special gift from God, leaving one free to pursue one's calling unencumbered by the burdens of family life (1 Cor. 7:32-35). This perspective was unusual in a society in which women received their identity and security from the men in their lives, and in which their chief role was to marry and bear children. Paul affirms the dignity of men and women whether married or single.

There were some in the Corinthian congregation who were blurring or confusing sexual distinctions in their practice of religion (1 Cor. 11:3-15). They may have thought that to be spiritual they should overcome sexuality (see 1 Tim. 4:3). Or they may have introduced ritual sex change as was practiced in the licentious worship of Dionysius, with men dressing as women and women as men.<sup>24</sup> Whatever the problem Paul was confronting in Corinth, he insisted that men and women retain their sexual identity in dress and hairstyle. He quoted Genesis 2 to make it clear to Corinthian Christians that sexual distinctions were part of God's plan, beginning in Eden.

Another dimension of the problem surfaces here. It appears that women, in their newfound freedom in Christ, were attempting to dominate men (cf. 1 Tim. 2:12). To counteract this trend, Paul quoted the arguments from Creation that support the elevated status of man (see 1 Cor. 11:8, 9). (As mentioned earlier in this article, the Creation account gives equal support to the elevated status of woman.)

Then, to restore a balanced view of the sexes, he once again affirmed the equal status of men and women in Christ: "Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man

nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God" (verses 11, 12).

"In the Lord" there is a mutual interdependence of the sexes and a mutual appreciation for the special gifts of each, because both equally "are from God."

**Descriptive Texts.** There are a number of New Testament references to women exercising leadership in the Christian churches. The casual nature of some of these texts indicates that such practices were common and accepted, with no need to justify them.

"Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but *any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head*" (verses 4, 5).

Here is a casual reference to the fact that women were praying and prophesying in the Christian congregations. This needs to be remembered in connection with the "be silent" passages that we will discuss later.

"On the morrow we departed and came to Caesarea; and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. And he had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied" (Acts 21:8, 9). This text can be seen as fulfillment of Joel's prophecy cited by Peter at Pentecost that "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."

"I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:2, 3).

Euodia and Syntyche were leaders in the Philippian church, fellow workers who labored side by side with Paul. It was important for the church that their differences be reconciled.

"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a *deaconess* of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require

from you, for she has been a *helper* of many and of myself as well" (Rom. 16:1, 2).

The translation "deaconess" is misleading, since it has modern connotations not present in the Greek. The word is actually masculine and means servant, deacon, or minister. Paul uses this word to describe himself and Apollos (1 Cor. 3:5) and those with the office of deacon in the church (1 Tim. 3:8-10). Phoebe is also called a helper, *prostatis*, which in its verb form describes the work of an overseer or manager (verse 5). She was an important leader of her congregation.

"Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also the churches of the Gentiles give thanks" (Rom. 16:3, 4).

Prisca (whom Luke calls Priscilla) is listed ahead of her husband several times, probably because she had a more outstanding personality. She and Aquila were associates of Paul until his death (2 Tim. 4:19), leaders of a home church (1 Cor. 16:19), and teachers of the Word. Priscilla even helped to instruct Apollos, the apostle, who was himself "an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures" (Acts 18:24). To make a significant contribution to his knowledge she must have been no mean scholar herself. Priscilla is a clear example of a woman having a teaching authority over a man.

"Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was" (Rom. 16:7, NRSV).

Junia is truly remarkable, a woman apostle. Though most modern translations make the name masculine—Junias—early Church Fathers Origen (A.D. 185-253), Jerome (340-419), and Chrysostom (344-407) regarded the name as feminine. It was not until the thirteenth century that the name was understood as masculine. Chrysostom eulogized, "Oh! how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!"<sup>25</sup>

"Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. . . . Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord" (verses 6-12, NIV).

In his letter to the Romans Paul lists no less than 10 women colleagues of his who were prominent missionaries and leaders of the early Christian communities.

These texts make it clear that in the New Testament churches the leadership of women was a fact of everyday life.<sup>26</sup> The prescriptive and descriptive texts above give evidence that in Christ there was to be no discrimination based upon sex.

**Corrective Texts.** Against this body of evidence it is necessary to examine the two passages that appear to contradict the evidence cited above. We need to determine whether these texts describe God's plan for all women in all times, or whether they relate to problems in Paul's day.

"As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church" (1 Cor. 14:33-35).

It is important to notice here that women are the *third* group in the church of Corinth whom Paul commands to be silent. Tongues-speakers without interpreters are told to be silent (verse 28), and prophets are to be silent to allow others to speak (verse 30).<sup>27</sup> Women are not the only ones singled out for rebuke.

Paul does not give a reason for silencing women; however, it is helpful to consider the circumstances he faced. In that day girls received little education, were married off at puberty to men twice their age, and were confined to the home. Religion was the major sphere of public life in which women participated, functioning as priestesses, temple prostitutes, and oracles for fortunetelling.<sup>28</sup> Paul's converts came out of heathen cults practicing wild orgies, ritual sex changes, and frenzied prophesying, in which women were major participants.<sup>29</sup>

His letters indicate that there were immorality, drunkenness, and mad disorder in the church of Corinth (1 Cor. 5:1; 11:21; 14:23), apparently with the newly liberated women



leading out. Under such circumstances it is understandable that he would insist that women be silent in church (1 Cor. 14:34, 35), and that both sexes preserve their sexual identity in dress and decorum (1 Cor. 11:6-15).<sup>30</sup> However, the same letter mentions that women may pray and prophesy in church if they are properly attired.

The other problematic text is found in a letter Paul wrote to Timothy regarding the church in Ephesus: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty" (1 Tim. 2:11-15).

Paul was concerned about false teachers bringing speculative doctrines into the flock (1 Tim. 1:3-7). Since he forbids women from teaching, it is possible that some of them, untaught in the law, were not only being led astray but also were promulgating "doctrines of demons," "silly myths," (1 Tim. 4:1, 7) and "old wives' tales" (verse 7, NIV); hence Paul asked that they learn in silence and not teach in the church.<sup>31</sup> Some of these teachers were attacking the home by forbidding marriage (verse 3).

Paul took the position that women should stay with their husbands (1 Cor. 7:12-16) and find their place among the saved by bearing children (1 Tim. 2:15) and taking care of the home (Titus 2:4, 5). To women who aspired to teach but were themselves deceived by false teachers, Paul spoke of Eve's vulnerability to deception.<sup>32</sup> His use of Genesis was illustrative rather than normative for all time.<sup>33</sup>

Paul achieved balance in the midst of extremes by throwing his weight in the opposite direction from extremists. When he fought those who defended old prejudices, he expressed the bold vision of Galatians 3:28. When he discerned the overstatement of the new liberties, he spoke up for the old, as in Corinthians. Our task is not to harmonize the

two tendencies into a perfect system but to discern where the accent should lie now.<sup>34</sup>

At this point it is significant to note what Ellen White says about Paul's texts forbidding women to speak in church, since she did not limit herself by those restrictions. According to the scriptural index to her writings, she makes no reference to the crucial passages at all, though she makes free use of nearby verses. She was certainly aware of these texts because they were used against her by those who challenged her right to speak in the churches. Church leaders defended her by using the arguments cited above.<sup>35</sup> One can only conclude that she thought the texts restricting women had a local application not relevant to all times and places.

Paul's restrictions upon women in church should not be understood as having the force of law. They are best understood as applications of law. Some laws are fundamental and enduring, and form the basis for lesser laws. Examples are the Ten Commandments and, in the United States, the Constitution. Case laws are always growing out of specific cases when the basic law must be applied. In Scripture they often begin with the word "when" or "if" — "When an ox gores a man," such and such shall be done (see Ex. 21 and 22).

Case laws do not have the enduring force of fundamental law, and may with time be changed or dropped. Jesus distinguished between the two kinds of law in the case of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11). He upheld the ten-commandment law against adultery by telling the woman, "Go, and sin no more." But He bypassed the case law that said "if a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die" (Deut. 22:22). He did not regard that law as binding in His day.<sup>36</sup>

It is a mistake to give every biblical precedent the weight of eternal law. If we did, we would execute anyone who picked up sticks on Sabbath (Num. 15:32-36), or who was rebellious (Deut. 21:18-21), or who lied before God's representative (Acts 5:1-11). Paul's statements restricting women tell us how he handled problems in the Greek churches. They are enlightening as examples of how similar problems might

be handled in similar situations. But they do not have the force of universal and eternal law. Few modern interpreters would apply the texts rigidly to women—that they must be silent in church, that they must never teach or have authority over men. There were numerous exceptions to these rules even in Paul's day, as we have noticed.

### **Headship and Subordination: The Question of Hierarchy**

The "chain of command" doctrine comes from Paul's statements on male headship and female subordination. To explain what he means, Paul makes an interesting comparison: "The head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). Here Paul compares the husband/wife relationship to the God/Christ relationship. This comparison opens the way for an understanding of how a hierarchy operates among equals, for Christ is equal with God (John 5:18; Phil. 2:6), yet subordinate to Him (John 14:28), deriving all His powers from God (John 5:19; 6:57), and doing everything at the Father's command (John 14:31). This tension between equality and subordination is significant because Jesus in His equal/subordinate role is the model for woman.

Some assume that Jesus' dependence on God was temporary, applying only to His humanity, but a careful study of the evidence supports the view that it is permanent. Jesus regarded independent action as sinful, stating that His dependence upon the Father was evidence of His deity (John 7:18). We generally assume that to be God means to exercise authority, act independently, make decisions and impose them on others, promote one's own will, and bring glory to oneself. In Jesus' estimation all these posturings are evidences of the sinful human nature. He cites His dependence on the Father as the highest evidence of His equality with the Father.

The question arises as to the role of the Father. Does He dominate? Does He act autonomously? Jesus revealed that the Father acts only in consultation with the Son (John 5:17, 20-22; 8:16). It appears that there is a mutual submission of

each to the will of the other. This is what constitutes the oneness of the Godhead. Not only so, but there are times when Father and Son exchange roles. The Father "has given all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22). During Christ's earthly ministry the Father gave "all things into his hand" (John 3:35; 13:3)—He turned over the rule of this world to the Son until every enemy is destroyed; then Christ will deliver the kingdom back to the Father and become subject to Him (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

The heavenly model illustrates that man/woman relationships should be characterized by harmony, consultation, and working together, with no independent decision-making. There can even be exchange of roles, with one or the other leading out in different areas. We all live in a web of hierarchies in the home, church, and workaday world, simultaneously leading and following. In marriage it is natural for husband and wife to exercise leadership in their areas of expertise. It is unwise for one to try to dominate the other.

### Mutual Submission<sup>37</sup>

The "chain of command" idea assumes that there is only a limited amount of power that man and woman fight over unless one is given control. It is based on the military and kingly model that God strongly opposed when Israel demanded a king (1 Sam. 8). Jesus opposed this model also:<sup>38</sup> "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

Jesus rejected the use of power to dominate others. The lordship of man over man, or man over woman, is a distortion of the image of God. To be the head is not to control but to be a source of power and strength that enables others to reach their potential, which is no less than "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Christ is the head of the church in the sense that He is its source of life—"the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God" (Col. 2:19; cf. Eph. 4:15, 16).

In describing the headship role of the husband, Ellen White speaks of his strength and support and large affections upon which the wife leans.<sup>39</sup> In God's plan headship does not repress. It enables.

Though Paul's counsel to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:18-32 sounds patriarchal to us in the twentieth century, it is revolutionary to all social structures based on the struggle for dominance. The passage speaks of headship and submission, yet the underlying dynamic transforms the terms into something opposite the normal meaning.

Paul gets lyrical on the subject of the husband-wife relationship. The command "Be filled with the Spirit" issues in a torrent of joys—making melody, giving thanks, being subject to each other out of reverence to Christ, wives to husbands, and husbands with love to their wives (verses 18-22ff.). (Note that where the English has the imperative, "Wives, be subject . . .," in the Greek there is no such imperative. The only command is to be filled with the Spirit.)

In the context of empowering by the Spirit, Paul states the principle of mutual submission following the example of Christ: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (verse 21). One might ask whether Christ, the head, ever subjected Himself to the church or to humanity, but this is Paul's precise meaning. Christ, who was equal with God, "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7).

Christ Himself declared that to rule was to serve; to be over was to be under (Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:13-16). In the light of Christ's example, Paul asks believers to submit to each other, or, as he stated elsewhere, "Honor one another above yourselves" (Rom. 12:10, NIV); "in humility count others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3).

As part of this mutual submission, Paul asks wives to

submit to their husbands, and husbands to love their wives. In that society, the women had already been socialized to make sacrifices for men in their lives, while the men had been socialized to dominate women and expected to be served by them. In view of the Spirit's power to fill those in a "power-down" position, and lift them up to maturity in Christ (see Eph. 3:19; 4:13), Paul now asks them to submit to their husbands from a totally different motivation, a genuine self-subordination rather than a submission to the demands of husbands or society.<sup>40</sup> As Christians they are called on to subordinate themselves in imitation of Christ and as a result of acknowledging *Him*, not their husbands, as lord.

And Paul's daring comparison between the husband as head and Christ as head is based not on "lordship" language but on "sacrificial servant" language. As the role of Christ as head is to enable the body to grow and build itself up (Eph. 4:15, 16), so the role of the husband as head is to nurture and cherish the wife (Eph. 5:29) so she can grow into maturity and strength. In Christ there is no power struggle but a mutual submission that builds the strengths of others and does not take advantage of their weaknesses.

The Fall introduced the rule of man over woman, which rapidly degenerated into male oppression and female degradation. To right this wrong, redemption introduces headship as a liberating, transforming power that exalts the feminine (whether as church or as woman) to the heights of the heavenly (Eph. 1:22-23; 3:20; 4:15, 16; 5:25-32). The purpose of headship is never to limit or restrict or hold down. (Paul never couples the headship concept with his temporary restrictions on women.)<sup>41</sup> Headship is never exclusive. It never posts a "Keep out!" sign on the door. How can the head be admitted while the body is excluded? Christ Himself opens up the inner circle of the Godhead to humanity (John 17:21). The purpose of headship in Paul's writings is always to enable, to empower, to exalt.

How then should women respond? Shouldn't they, inspired by the vision, seek to develop every talent (Matt. 25:14-23), exercise every God-given gift (1 Cor. 12:8-11),

and reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13)? Then they can fulfill their God-given roles as helpers in front of man, co-rulers over the earth, *servants* to humanity. Then from a position of strength they also can empower the weak, lift up the fallen, and help the oppressed.

### Does God Use Women?

Having examined a portion of the biblical evidence regarding women, we must finally ask the question What is God doing? In our age, has God used women in apostolic and pastoral roles? It is astonishing that a church that was raised up largely by the ministry of a woman, and which from its infancy has defended God's call of women, should have problems with this issue.

The question of whether Ellen White was ordained is a theological quibble. How could human hands ordain her when God Himself had signally empowered her with the greatest of gifts? She not only taught, helped in the formulation of doctrine, and exercised authority over men—even presidents of the General Conference—but she did the work of both prophet and apostle. She led out in the founding and development of a new movement and its many institutions. She was "sent" all over the United States, to Europe, and to the far continent of Australia to plant the message in areas where it had never been heard before. She left behind her a body of inspired writings destined to guide this movement until the end of time.

Space forbids mention of the outstanding women God has called to the work of the gospel, though many of them are identified in other chapters of this book. Hudson Taylor's great mission to inland China utilized the efforts of brave women who were among the "seventy" and the "one hundred twenty" whom He sent out. These women, often alone, pioneered the work under the most difficult circumstances.

The missionary movement of the nineteenth century drew heavily upon women as a resource, as Kit Watts shows. The largest congregation in the world today is structured upon thousands of women leaders of cell groups, some of whom

are now being sent out to other countries to raise up churches.<sup>42</sup> Adventism has had its share of outstanding women.

The Adventist Church now needs to decide whether to encourage the participation of women in the full-time work of the ministry and to ordain them to that task. While the church hesitates, most Adventist women are investing their time and energies in secular employment. In view of the overwhelming task of world mission that confronts this church, should not Adventist women hear the call to dedicate their lives full-time to the work of spreading the gospel? Shouldn't the burden and responsibility of the world task be laid upon their shoulders? Shouldn't there be 100 women ministers where now there is one?

## Notes

\* Scripture references in this chapter are from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> ———, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> ———, *The Adventist Home*, pp. 227, 231.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>5</sup> For an excellent discussion of how to interpret Scripture, see the chapter "The Need to Interpret," by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, in *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), pp. 15-27. An Adventist statement on Bible study methods is found in the *Adventist Review*, Jan. 22, 1987, "Methods of Bible Study Committee Report," pp. 18-20. See especially section 4, f-k.

<sup>6</sup> Willmore D. Eva identifies two methods of approaching the Bible on the issue of women. The first he describes as an "atomistic" way of applying the biblical data. The proponents of this method tend to focus on specific biblical statements and particular cases to shine light on the subject. Proponents of the second hermeneutic look for the general ethical principles they find inherent in the Scriptures as a whole, concentrating upon its central events and issues. They also search out the historical and cultural dynamics that might have influenced the approach of the inspired writer. Taking their findings, they attempt to apply them to any contemporary ethical or social concern. "A Biblical Position Paper: The Role and Standing of Women in the Ministry of the Church," January 1985, p. 4 (available from the Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists).

<sup>7</sup> For a defense of the plural meaning of *Elohim*, see Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Meaning of 'Let Us' in Genesis 1:26," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 13, No. 1 (Spring 1975): 58-66.

<sup>8</sup> See Gen. 1:1, 2 for Father and Spirit are one at Creation; the Word was with God at Creation (John 1:1-3); "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

<sup>9</sup> Karl Barth was the first major theologian to set forth this view, quoted in C. G. Berkouwer's *Man, the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 72. See also Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 35; Aida Besancon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1985), pp. 21, 22; Gerhard F. Hasel, "Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3," *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (Biblical Research Institute Committee, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), pp. 12, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Phyllis Tribble, "God, Nature of, in the Old Testament," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the*



*Bible*, supplementary volume, p. 368. For this understanding of breasts, see Isa. 66:11, 13.

<sup>11</sup> The words for "mercy" and "merciful" come from the root word *womb*.

<sup>12</sup> For a book on feminine images of God, see Virginia R. Mollenkott, *The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female* (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

<sup>13</sup> See Ex. 18:4; Deut. 33:7; Ps. 33:20; 115:9; 146:5.

<sup>14</sup> William Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), s.v. *neged*. The corresponding noun form *nagid* means "leader," "ruler," or "prince."

<sup>15</sup> Spencer, pp. 23-25.

<sup>16</sup> Hasel, *Man and Woman*, pp. 20, 21. He adds that the remarkable importance of woman in the biblical accounts of Creation has no parallel in ancient Near Eastern literature. It indicates the high position of woman in the Old Testament in contrast to woman's low status in the ancient Near East in general.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth L. Vine, "The Legal and Social Status of Women in the Pentateuch," *Symposium*, pp. 44, 45; Jerry Gladson, "The Role of Women in the Old Testament," *ibid.*, pp. 46, 47, 49, 54; Phyllis Tribble, "Woman in the Old Testament," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, supplementary volume, p. 964.

<sup>18</sup> W. Specht, "Jesus and Women," *Symposium*, pp. 78-80, 82, 87.

<sup>19</sup> George F. Moore, *Judaism*, 2:128.

<sup>20</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 173.

<sup>21</sup> Spencer, pp. 59, 60.

<sup>22</sup> Jeremias, p. 374.

<sup>23</sup> For my organization of these materials I am indebted to S. Scott Bartchy, in "Power, Submission, and Sexual Identity Among the Early Christians," *Essays on New Testament Christianity*, A. Robert Wetzel, ed. (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1978), pp. 57-74.

<sup>24</sup> Richard and Catherine Kroeger have documented such practices in the Greek Dionysian religion and mystery cults. See "Pandemonium and Silence at Corinth" in *The Reformed Journal*, June 1978, pp. 6-11; "Sexual Identity in Corinth," December 1978, pp. 9-15.

<sup>25</sup> Spencer, p. 101.

<sup>26</sup> For more information on these women, see Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, "Women in the Pre-Pauline and Pauline Communities," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 33, Nos. 3, 4 (Spring-Summer, 1978): 157, 158, and Spencer, pp. 99-120; for useful summaries, see Jewett, pp. 145, 146; Willard M. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1983), pp. 174-178.

<sup>27</sup> Bartchy, p. 68.

<sup>28</sup> Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), pp. 64, 75.

<sup>29</sup> Kroeger, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), p. 232. "Paul's major concern is not the behavior of women, but the protection of the Christian community . . . from being mistaken for one of the orgiastic, secret, oriental cults that undermined public order and decency."

<sup>31</sup> Spencer notes the positive aspects of the text. Paul said, "Let a woman learn" (imperative mood). Contrary to the practice of the day, women are commanded to study. To "learn in silence" was the characteristic way of rabbinic study, indicating respect for the rabbi. In commanding women to learn, Paul was following the example of Jesus, who wanted Mary to sit at His feet and learn. Though learning usually leads to teaching, Paul at that time did not allow women to teach, because they were not ready. "I am not (currently) allowing women to teach" is an acceptable translation of *epitrepo*. Furthermore, the sense in the Greek does not forbid women to teach men, but only to dominate or lord it over them (*Gr. authentein*).

<sup>32</sup> The prohibition on women's teaching may have been owing to the ease with which the women were falling under the influence of impostors. Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 76.

<sup>33</sup> Spencer, pp. 89, 90.

<sup>34</sup> Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 37.

<sup>35</sup> J. N. Andrews, "May Women Speak in Meeting?" *Review and Herald*, Jan. 2, 1879, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> The technical names for the two kinds of law are apodictic (absolute) and casuistic (related to cases). This line of reasoning was suggested to me by James Cox of the Washington Institute for Contemporary Issues, Washington, D.C.

<sup>37</sup> This section on mutual submission is largely taken from Scott Bartchy's masterful article "Issues of Power and a Theology of the Family," presented at the Consultation on a Theology of the Family held at Fuller Theological Seminary, November 1984, pp. 40-46.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>39</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 216. It is interesting to note Ellen White's position on headship. Though she acknowledges that the husband is the head of the wife and deserves deferential respect (*Testimonies for the Church* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948], vol. 1, p. 307), most of her comments on male headship consist in cautions that husbands are not to quote this text to assert their rights or abuse their privileges, and that neither husband nor wife is to attempt to control the other (*The Adventist Home*, pp. 106, 107, 215). Far from stressing woman's subordinate positions to man, she asserts that woman was created to stand by man's side as his equal and should be treated as his equal (*The Adventist Home*, pp. 227, 231). She clearly insists upon the pre-Fall rather than the post-Fall status of woman. She does not exalt the Genesis 3:16 statement—"he shall rule over you"—as "chain of command" preachers do, but asserts that it has lent itself to abuse, making the lot of women very bitter (*The Adventist Home*, p. 115). In her writings she exalts woman's function in the home—there she is queen and has a role unequalled in its importance, the molding of human lives (*The Adventist Home*, p. 231). However, she also gives women an important role outside of the home (e.g., *Evangelism*, pp. 464-481).

<sup>40</sup> Bartchy, p. 42.

<sup>41</sup> First Corinthians 11 does not restrict women, but specifies that they must cover their heads when they prophesy or pray (verse 5).

<sup>42</sup> Paul Yonggi Cho tells the story of his church's phenomenal growth in his book, *Successful Home Cell Groups* (South Plainfield, N.J.: Bridge Publishing, 1981).

## CHAPTER 2

# Ellen White's Contemporaries: Significant Women in the Early Church

KIT WATTS

What would the Seventh-day Adventist Church be without publications, schools, hospitals, and the Dorcas Society (Adventist Community Services)? If women were not nurses, accountants, secretaries, deans of women, authors, teachers, Sabbath school leaders, and musicians, how long would the church as we know it function? Certainly, without a vision or a prophet to articulate it, the church would have faltered in its infancy. And without women today, the church would shrink in size by 60 percent.

Finding and telling their stories is another matter. During the 70-year period between 1844, when Ellen Gould Harmon received her first vision, and her death in 1915, she called women within the sound of her voice and the influence of her pen to invest their talents for the kingdom by taking up the work at hand. Hundreds and thousands did.

In 1926 Matilda Erickson Andross, the only woman to compile a general church history, completed *Story of the Advent Message*, a book commissioned by the Missionary

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Volunteer Department of the General Conference (GC), and written particularly for young people. In her foreword, Mrs. Andross provided this insight: "It is a matter of regret that we cannot crowd many more into this space, and that so few of our noble women in the army of Prince Emmanuel are present. . . . Somehow, so many of them hide behind their husbands and escape the press, thus making it difficult to learn of them."<sup>1</sup>

But, as Paul might phrase it, these very women surround us like a great cloud of witnesses. When placed together, their stories reveal the extent to which women boosted every phase of the church's development and outreach.

Among its biographies, the *SDA Encyclopedia* lists 63 women. Indexes found in standard histories of the church supplement this list. While an index may not be the best indicator of a book's contents, it does reflect some of what the author and publisher consider important.

For example, Arthur Spalding's four-volume set, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, one of the more anecdotal histories, lists about 150 women in its indexes. *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, Richard Schwarz's textbook for denominational history, lists 30 women, and C. Mervyn Maxwell's *Tell It to the World* has 33.

Arthur L. White, in his six-volume biography of his grandmother, records about 75 different women's names in the indexes.

Ava M. Covington's *They Also Served*, published in 1940, provides stories of 15 pioneer Adventist women. In 1976 John G. Beach published *Notable Women of Spirit*, the first documented history of women's contributions to church work, a book that gives considerable information about 32 individuals.

The list of women I will deal with here includes many of the women whose stories are contained in the above works, and several not treated in previous histories. Some are pioneers and visionaries. Others possessed a wide scope of talent and resourcefulness. Some faced challenge after challenge. Still others, focusing upon a single objective, made it a

life's work. A few, not hiding behind their husbands or male contemporaries, were well known in their own right. Others represent all those who lived in the background. By their very invisibility they often best expressed the church's identity—for they were the faithful, the sacrificial, and the caring.

### Publishing and Editorial Work

*"There are positions where some can earn better wages than at the [publication] office, but they can never find a position more important, more honorable, or more exalted than the work of God in the office. Those who labor faithfully and unselfishly will be rewarded. For those there is a room prepared, compared with which all earthly honors and pleasure are as small dust of the balance."*<sup>2</sup>

*"Seventh-day Adventists had a publication 10 years before they had a name. Printer's ink was the lifeblood of the young movement. And women worked side by side with men to bring out the pamphlets, papers, and books that one day, Ellen White prophesied, would be scattered like leaves of autumn and encircle the world like streams of light."*<sup>3</sup>

**Annie Rebekah Smith** (1828-1855), older sister of Uriah Smith, was the same age as Ellen White. After her conversion to Adventism by Joseph Bates in 1851, she submitted the poem "Fear Not Little Flock" to the little weekly paper, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.

Although Annie had given up teaching because of eye trouble, she accepted James White's invitation to work in the *Review* office. She was 23. When the Whites traveled she published the paper. Her untimely death in 1855 of tuberculosis cut short her work of writing hymns and poems, some of which appear in the new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*.

The talented **Adelia Patten Van Horn** (1839-1922) joined the White family in 1859 to take care of the children. She was with them when Henry, age 16, died at the Howland home in Maine in 1863.

Adelia married Isaac Van Horn in 1865, but she continued to serve the young church. She was the fourth editor of the *Youth's Instructor*, carrying the responsibility from 1864

to 1867. From 1871 to 1873 she served as the fifth treasurer of the General Conference; she was the first of three women to hold that post. Later in the 1870s she and her husband pioneered the Adventist work in the Walla Walla valley, when Washington State was still a distant mission field.

**Maud Sisley Boyd** (1851-1973) actively served the church for more than 60 years. She saw the beginning of Adventist work in the United States, Switzerland, England, South Africa, and Australia. According to her own account,<sup>4</sup> the Sisley family emigrated from Kent, England, to Convis, Michigan, in 1863, where they became Sabbathkeepers. Maud was one of eight children. James and Ellen White visited the family farm in 1867, urging them to move to Battle Creek. There Maud, at age 15, began working in the publishing house composing room.

Maud Sisley was the first single Adventist woman called into mission service. In 1876 the General Conference voted \$10,000 for J. N. Andrews to establish a printing house in Europe—but he needed help to keep the new publications going. In November 1877 Maud sailed from Boston with William and Jenny Ings to provide that help. Two years later she returned briefly to her native England to assist J. N. Loughborough in pioneer tent evangelism. She also married Charles L. Boyd. When Adelia and Isaac Van Horn left the North Pacific Conference in 1882, Maud and Charles Boyd continued their pioneering work.

The Boyds were among the first Adventist missionaries who entered South Africa in 1887. The climate took its toll; they lost a daughter, and returned to the United States when Charles' health failed. He died in 1898.

However, Maud's pioneering days were not over. In 1899 she sailed for Australia to connect with the newly established college at Avondale. During the next nine years she served as matron, preceptress, and teacher. In her last years Mrs. Boyd was a Bible instructor, first in Australia, and then in Loma Linda and Glendale, California.

In 1866, the same year that Maud Sisley became a teenage employee at the Review and Herald Publishing Association,

Minerva Jane Loughborough Chapman (1829-1923) also joined the publishing house staff as a typesetter. According to A. G. Daniells, there were just 11 workers at the time, including James White, president of the institution.<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. Chapman's talents soon brought new responsibilities; she was made secretary-treasurer of the publishing association until she was appointed the editor of the *Youth's Instructor* from 1875 to 1879, and again from 1884 to 1889. She retired from the press in 1893, after 27 years of service.

Mary Kelsey White (1857-1890) began working in the Review and Herald when she was just 13, first in the bindery and then in the composing room and the proofroom. Four years later she moved from Battle Creek, Michigan, to California, where the Pacific Press Publishing Association was established. Mary worked side by side with Willie White, son of James and Ellen. In February 1876 the young couple married. The next year she became the assistant editor of the new publication *Signs of the Times*. When she and Willie returned to Battle Creek to study, Mary took a brief turn editing the *Youth's Instructor* from 1879 to 1880.

From 1885 to 1887 she and Willie were stationed in Basel, Switzerland, at the same time Ellen White visited Europe. To her husband's and mother-in-law's great sorrow, Mary took ill with tuberculosis and died three years after returning to the United States; she was only 33.

Adelaide Bee Cooper Evans was a teenager when she went to work at the Review and Herald in 1883. She began as a proofreader at age 13. Under Uriah Smith and A. T. Jones, she became a copy editor. Then, from 1899 to 1904, she edited the *Youth's Instructor*, the first of a long line of long-tenured editors of that publication. She married the president and manager of the Review and Herald, I. H. Evans, in 1904. Together they spent 16 years in Asia as missionaries. She continued her writing, and is perhaps best remembered as the author of such children's books as *Really Trulies*.

Anna L. Ingels Hindson (1862-1933) joined the Pacific

Press staff in 1883, not long after she became a Seventh-day Adventist. She had administrative as well as editorial abilities. In 1893 she went to Australia and was soon pressed into service as secretary of the Australasian Union Conference, and later as secretary-treasurer of the West Australian Mission. Her tenure of 18 years editing the *Missionary Leader* and 34 years of editing the *Australasian Record* are unrivaled. In addition, she served eight years as the union secretary of the Young People's Department, and for 30 years as secretary of the Australasian Union Sabbath School Department.

**Fannie M. Dickerson Chase** (1864-1956), who taught science and mathematics at South Lancaster Academy for 20 years, held the office of editor of the *Youth's Instructor* for one of the longest terms, serving from 1903 to 1922. **Lora E. Clement** learned under her leadership; Clement succeeded Chase as editor and served from 1923 to 1952.

### Home Missionary Work

*"God calls for earnest women workers, workers who are prudent, warmhearted, tender, and true to principle. He calls for persevering women who will take their minds from self and their personal convenience, and will center them on Christ, speaking words of truth, praying with the persons to whom they can obtain access, laboring for the conversion of souls."*<sup>6</sup>

Editorial and publishing work marked the first cooperative efforts by the band of Advent believers in the 1840s to define themselves as a group and their beliefs as a message. Out of this root grew several branches. Adventist women initiated and led these developing ministries for many years. Over the decades the names of these ministries have changed and men came to dominate their leadership. But originally it was women who conceived and launched them.

It was women who developed "home missionary work," with pennies and prayers from their own kitchens and parlors. They organized to distribute printed literature in their neighborhoods or to mail it to distant countries. They



wrote thousands of personal letters to discouraged believers or to answer questions raised by nonbelievers. With Ellen White's encouragement, some came to look upon their own towns as mission fields where personal visits and Bible readings would tell for Christ. Others recognized the needs of the poor for food and clothing. And still others worked to systematize this ministry and to coordinate its efforts.

In June 1869 nine women organized the Vigilant Missionary Society. This society was the forerunner of three major branches of work in our present-day church—the Adventist Book Centers, publishing, and personal ministries (now part of church ministries and variously known in the past as lay activities or home missions). Another now forlorn offspring of this original experiment is the Bible instructors' work.

**Maria L. Huntley** (1847-1890) moved to South Lancaster, Massachusetts, from Washington, New Hampshire, in 1870, where she joined the Vigilant Missionary Society and was elected its second president.<sup>7</sup> The group first met on Wednesday afternoons at 3:00 to pray for their own children or friends whose hope of the Advent had grown dim. Acting upon their prayers, the group wrote letters, visited the discouraged, lent books, and gave away free literature. Their zeal to share the gospel burned deeply enough to lead some to learn new languages in order to correspond with people in foreign countries.

Sensing the society's potential, Stephen Haskell in 1870 promoted the group as the Tract and Missionary Society. Through his influence the 1874 General Conference session established the General (later International) Tract and Missionary Society. Maria Huntley became its first secretary, a post she held until her death 16 years later at the age of 43. Huntley was the only woman other than Ellen White to address the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis, suggesting the prominence of this work in the denomination.<sup>8</sup>

Two other key members of the "V M Society," who also suffered ill health, were **Mary Priest** (1823-1889) and **Mary How Haskell** (1813-1894). Elected the first secretary of the

South Lancaster group in 1869, Mary Priest shouldered the responsibility until her death. The records indicate that she wrote 6,000 missionary letters during this 20-year period.<sup>9</sup> Mary How was more than 20 years older than Stephen Haskell and an invalid when he married her.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, she was a loyal worker and gave stability and strength to the women's missionary band.

**Hetty Hurd Haskell** was a teacher when she was converted at a camp meeting in Oakland, California, in 1884. The next year she attended a newly established school to train Bible workers in San Francisco. Her new career led Hetty into missionary service in England (1887 to 1892) and South Africa (1892 to 1897).

In 1897 on one of his missionary journeys, Stephen Haskell, now widowed, met Hetty and persuaded her to come to Australia and marry him. Ellen White reported that the spirited Hetty was one of the "lady carpenters" who got the men off dead center when building had come to a halt at Avondale College.<sup>11</sup> She was a "woman of rare ability as a manager," said White.<sup>12</sup>

**Loretta Viola Farnsworth Robinson** (1857-1933) was reputedly the first Bible worker among Seventh-day Adventists when in 1884 she and her husband, Asa T. Robinson, pioneered city mission work in Worcester, Massachusetts.<sup>13</sup> The twelfth of William Farnsworth's 22 children, Loretta was 10 years old when James and Ellen White and John Andrews conducted a revival at the Washington, New Hampshire, church. She was one of the 13 young people who chose to be baptized through the ice on Millan Pond.

The Robinsons were early missionaries to South Africa and Australia. Loretta had a reputation for being a fine Bible student and an excellent preacher.<sup>14</sup>

Two single women whose ministry as Bible workers would have long-lasting effects were **Lucy Post** and **Caroline Louise Kleuser**. Lucy Post (1845-1937) converted to Adventism when she was 35.<sup>15</sup> She entered denominational employment in 1884, becoming a Bible instructor in Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Ohio. When she was almost 50 years of age,

the church asked her to become a missionary. Without hesitation she sailed for South America in 1895, along with two married couples. Colporteurs were stirring interest among German, Swiss, French, and English emigrants in Uruguay and Argentina.<sup>16</sup> Lucy spent seven years working principally among the English-speaking population. Several of her "readers" were among the first to be baptized in Uruguay.

Bible worker **Louise Kleuser** (1890-1976) became the first woman to serve as an associate in the General Conference Ministerial Association, after having served many years as an educational secretary in local conferences.

No one challenged Adventist women to become home missionaries more than **Sarepta Myrenda Irish Henry** (1839-1900). Mrs. Henry burst upon Adventism late in life. Enfeebled after many years as a national evangelist for the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), she recuperated at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, accepted Adventist teachings, and began to correspond with Ellen White, then in Australia. Although the two never met, they sensed in each other kindred spirits.

Mrs. Henry struggled with the public role that she herself had taken in the outcry against liquor, but Ellen White encouraged her not to sever her ties with the WCTU.<sup>17</sup> A dynamo of action, she singlehandedly established a "woman ministry" among Adventists,<sup>18</sup> and wrote a regular column in the *Review and Herald* from 1898 until her death in early 1900.

A. W. Spalding credits her with instituting in the Adventist Church "the first semblance of an organized effort to train parents and to give help in their problems."<sup>19</sup> Recognizing the nature of her own leadership and ministry, the General Conference Committee on March 30, 1898, recorded the following:

"The secretary called up the question of ministerial license for Mrs. S.M.I. Henry. Several remarked that it was their judgment that she should receive a ministerial license, which would be more in keeping with her line of work. A

motion prevailed to grant her such recognition from the General Conference."

Welfare ministry dates back to a woman's prayer band in October 1874, in Battle Creek, Michigan. Eight women became charter members of the Dorcas and Benevolent Association. **Martha Byington Amadon** (1834-1937), daughter of the church's first president, John Byington, became the first Dorcas president.<sup>20</sup> Supplying food and clothing to the poor, caring for orphans and widows, and ministering to the sick were the group's objectives. When the Home Missionary Department was organized in 1913, the Dorcas Society came under its direction.

Incorporating many of these strands of women's personal ministry efforts, the Home Missionary Department was first organized as a branch of the Publishing Department in 1913 because of its emphasis on literature distribution.<sup>21</sup> **Edith M. Graham** (d. 1918), treasurer of the Australasian Union Conference, was asked to lead it.

Responding positively to her five years of leadership and her recommendation that the Home Missionary Department be recognized as an independent department, the General Conference session of 1918 reelected Graham as its secretary. Unfortunately, she passed away a few months later.<sup>22</sup>

### Sabbath School

*"Who can better represent the religion of Christ than Christian women, women who are earnestly laboring to bring souls to the light of truth? Who else is so well adapted to the work of the Sabbath school?"*<sup>23</sup>

James and Ellen White early felt the need for a publication especially for young people. In August 1852 they published the first issue of the *Youth's Instructor*, a paper destined to serve the church's youth for the next 118 years. Although the first issue contained four "Sabbath lessons" and urged parents to use the material and establish Sabbath schools for even two or three children,<sup>24</sup> it was not until 1855 that a serious attempt was made to provide systematic Bible study materials.

**Adelia Patten** is credited with ushering in specialized Bible lessons for children and youth in 1863. Subsequently, she became the editor of the *Youth's Instructor* (YI).

In 1869 G. H. Bell, following Patten as YI editor, wrote two series of lessons for the paper and put a weekly Sabbath school program into practice in Battle Creek. According to Spalding, Lillian Affolter taught a class of the smallest children. It was affectionately called the "bird's nest class" because, in addition to comprising the littlest students, it met in a circular upper chamber of the Battle Creek Tabernacle.

The kindergarten grew to be so popular that it "became the mecca of all visitors and of all who could conscientiously detach themselves from other duties."<sup>25</sup> With F. E. Belden, Affolter produced special Bible nature lessons and a book of songs for this age group.

In 1877 the first state Sabbath school association was organized in California. The following year Eva Perkins (1858-1942) became the first corresponding secretary. Ever since, women have been intimately involved with Sabbath school work. More research needs to be done on their leadership and contributions.

**Anna L. Ingels Hindson** (1862-1933) became secretary of the Australasian Union Conference and held that position until she married James Hindson in 1898. She may be best known, however, for her substantial contribution as secretary of the Australasian Union Sabbath School Department for 30 years.<sup>26</sup>

A pioneer missionary to Korea in 1907, **Mimi Scharffenberg** (1883-1919) wore many hats. Besides superintending Sabbath school work, she eventually edited the Korean *Signs of the Times*, taught school, and translated SDA publications into Korean until two years before her death at age 35.<sup>27</sup> Her sister, **Theodora Scharffenberg Wangerin**, who arrived in Korea with her husband in 1909, carried forward much of the work Mimi had begun. Widowed in 1917, Mrs. Wangerin spent most of the next 22 years in Korea until evacuated during World War II. For 20 of those years, she served as Sabbath school secretary in that mission.

Although her years of service extend much beyond the boundaries of this chapter, no discussion of Sabbath school work would be satisfactory without an account of **Flora (Lorena Florence) Fait Plummer** (1862-1945). No one has had a greater impact upon the denomination's Sabbath schools than she. She led the General Conference Sabbath School Department for 23 years—longer than any other individual. (She and Edith Graham were the only women to head GC departments until M. Carol Hetzell was named head of the Communication Department in 1975.)<sup>28</sup> More than that, she shaped its philosophy and policies, and imbued it with a vision that still gives it energy and purpose.

While Flora and her husband, Frank, were teaching in public schools in Iowa in 1886, she became a Seventh-day Adventist. Almost immediately she became active in the Iowa Sabbath School Association. By June 1891 she was elected its president. In 1897 Mrs. Plummer's administrative abilities were recognized in two ways. She was elected secretary of the Iowa Conference, and she was elected to the executive committee of the International Sabbath School Association. In early 1900, when Clarence Santee was called to California, Mrs. Plummer became Iowa's acting conference president, the only known case of a woman to hold such a position.

With the General Conference reorganization in 1901, Mrs. Plummer was invited to become the first corresponding secretary for the Sabbath School Department. She also continued as head of the Minnesota Sabbath School Department until at least 1903. She was elected secretary of the General Conference Sabbath School Department in 1913, a position she held until her retirement in 1936. The emphasis on weekly mission stories and offerings for foreign missions can be traced to Mrs. Plummer's own "pluck and determination," as she herself describes it in her autobiography.<sup>29</sup>

### Finances and Administration

*"A great work is to be done in our world, and every talent is to be used in accordance with righteous principles. If a woman is appointed by the Lord to do a certain work, her*

work is to be estimated according to its value. Every laborer is to receive his or her just due."<sup>30</sup>

"The Lord instructed me that our sisters who have received a training that has fitted them for positions of responsibility are to serve with faithfulness and discernment in their calling, using their influence wisely and, with their brethren in the faith, obtaining an experience that will fit them for still greater usefulness."<sup>31</sup>

With the expense of publishing materials, Adventists needed financial support. They sought it primarily through subscription fees and freewill gifts from their readers. Later, money was collected to support ministers, teachers, medical workers, and missionaries. The church soon needed competent accountants and treasurers, and women were among those who emerged as financial leaders.

During the first 20 years of the church's official organization, three women were invested with responsibility to oversee the General Conference treasury—Adelia Patten Van Horn, Fredricka House Sisley, and Minerva Jane Loughborough Chapman.

Adelia Patten's financial skills were publicly recognized when she was credited in the *Review* for straightening out a financial tangle at the publishing house while James White was ill.<sup>32</sup> Adelia's term as GC treasurer was from 1871 to 1873, years of great financial stress as debts mounted at the Health Reform Institute.

After Fredricka House (1852-1934) attended Battle Creek College, she became secretary-treasurer of the publishing association. In 1875 she married William Conqueror Sisley, one of Maud Sisley's brothers. That same year she also became GC treasurer. She helped her husband found Union College in 1890, and, like several other leaders of the period, they became missionaries in England, South Africa, and Australia.<sup>33</sup>

As earlier mentioned, Minerva Jane Loughborough Chapman (1829-1923), a sister of the pioneer evangelist and administrator John Loughborough, twice edited the *Youth's Instructor*. Undoubtedly, her experience as treasurer of the

publishing association (beginning in 1875) led to her election as GC treasurer from 1877 to 1883. During the years 1885 to 1887, Mrs. Chapman became corresponding secretary for the GC; it was during part of that period (1884 to 1889) that she served her second term with the *Instructor*.<sup>34</sup>

**Jennie Thayer** (1853-1940) divided her lifework for the church between editorial responsibilities and financial administration. Her parents, Abijah and Rhoda Thayer, were in the 1844 movement and among the earliest Sabbathkeepers. She was their thirteenth child. After she had studied for two years at Battle Creek College, the Michigan Conference hired her as secretary-treasurer of their blossoming Tract Society. She was also secretary of the State Health and Temperance Association from 1879 to 1882.

Subsequently, Jenny went to England for six years, where she developed her editorial touch by assisting J. N. Loughborough in his pioneering evangelism and publishing efforts.

After Maria Huntley's untimely death, Jenny became corresponding secretary of the International Tract Society in Chicago. She also became the Atlantic Union Conference secretary-treasurer and auditor—one of the denomination's few women who reached this level.<sup>35</sup> (Another was Edith Graham, who was treasurer of the Australasian Union Conference before she came to the General Conference Home Missionary Department in 1913.)

Many regard **Nellie Helen Rankin Druillard** (1844-1937) as one of Adventism's most remarkable women and a particularly able financier.<sup>36</sup> She was one of 10 redheaded girls from an Adventist family in Wisconsin.<sup>37</sup> Spalding stated that **Ida Rankin** was the first dean of women at Battle Creek College and remained active in teaching. **Effie Rankin** became the first matron at Battle Creek and later at Union College. **Melissa** was the mother of **Lora Clement**, who edited the *Youth's Instructor* longer than anyone else.

**Nellie Rankin** rose to success rapidly in the field of education. She taught in rural Wisconsin, then moved to Boulder, Colorado, where she was soon superintendent of the city's schools. After working briefly at Battle Creek Sanitar-



ium, she relocated in Nebraska. For several years she superintended the public schools in Furnas County.

In 1886 Nellie accepted the Nebraska Conference's invitation to become secretary of the Tract Society. Two years later she was elected the conference treasurer. Meanwhile, she married businessman Alma Druillard, a man of means. In 1889 the Druillards went to South Africa. Nellie immediately became treasurer and auditor of the conference.

Mrs. Druillard helped in the founding of three significant Adventist institutions—Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC), Madison College, and Riverside Sanitarium.

While she was treasurer of the newly established EMC in 1903, her husband died. But in 1904, with Ellen White's personal encouragement, she donated money to help E. A. Sutherland, P. T. Magan, and Bessie DeGraw found Madison College in Tennessee. Mrs. Druillard, age 60, became the school's treasurer and fiscal adviser for the next 20 years.

At age 78 she determined to do something for "Negroes of the South." Her determination and financial contributions led to the opening of Riverside Sanitarium in 1927. Nellie Druillard is credited with singlehandedly organizing the institution and training its workers. In 1935, at age 91, she turned the hospital over to the General Conference.<sup>38</sup>

### Medical Work

*"In almost every church there are young men and women who might receive education either as nurses or physicians. They will never have a more favorable opportunity than now."*<sup>39</sup>

*"Whether in foreign missions or in the home field, all missionaries, both men and women, will gain much more ready access to people, . . . if they are able to minister to the sick.*

*"Women who go as missionaries to heathen lands may thus find opportunity for giving the gospel to the women of those lands, when every other door of access is closed."*<sup>40</sup>

By 1865, when the Seventh-day Adventist Church had no more than 4,000 members, Ellen White realized that writing

and lecturing about health reform was not enough. She envisioned a place where principles of healthful living could be taught and practiced, and where those who were ill could be helped to recover.<sup>41</sup> In May 1866 the General Conference session voted to establish such a place, and by September the first patients were admitted to the Western Health Reform Institute, forerunner of Battle Creek Sanitarium.<sup>42</sup>

One of the first two physicians was **Phoebe Lamson**. While the information is sketchy, it appears she gained her training from Dr. James C. Jackson, a prominent health reformer and hydrotherapy advocate in Dansville, New York.

Dr. Lamson worked at Battle Creek for a number of years. According to John Harvey Kellogg, "she gave herself unreservedly to her work and rendered invaluable service to the institution, not only through good medical advice, but through the Christian comfort and cheer that she was always ready to give to despondent patients."<sup>43</sup>

**Katherine (Kate) Lindsay** (1842-1923) is the dominant female figure in pioneer Adventist medical work. Born in Wisconsin of Scotch Presbyterian immigrants, Kate early demonstrated an independent spirit. When Isaac Sanborn preached in her area, she joined the Sabbathkeeping group in spite of her mother's protests.<sup>44</sup>

Although Kate stayed home to help until she was 25, she thirsted for education but was able to finish only eight grades. Soon after the Civil War she enrolled in a newly established nursing school run by health reformer Dr. R. T. Trall. Kate moved to the Battle Creek health institute in 1869. Encouraged by her colleagues, she entered the University of Michigan in 1870 with the second class that accepted female medical students. Despite the prevailing notion that women were not suited to higher education because of their delicate health, Kate graduated in 1875 at the head of her class.

Returning to Battle Creek, Dr. Lindsay campaigned tirelessly for an Adventist nursing school. It opened in 1883. As one of the teaching staff, she promoted and demanded

professional competence from her students, who both feared and admired her.

After 20 years in Battle Creek, Dr. Lindsay became a missionary at the Claremont Sanitarium in South Africa in 1895. After returning to the United States in 1900, she settled near the Colorado Sanitarium, which had opened in Boulder just five years earlier. Although she served as medical superintendent in 1902,<sup>45</sup> she invested her skills most heavily in the school of nursing until her retirement in 1920.

**Lauretta Eby Kress** (1863-1955) studied nursing under the strict Dr. Lindsay at Battle Creek.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps under that doctor's influence, Lauretta and her husband, Daniel, chose to study medicine at the University of Michigan, graduating in 1894. At Battle Creek Sanitarium one of their memorable patients was Mrs. S.M.I. Henry, whose miraculous healing and conversion they both witnessed.<sup>47</sup>

The Kresses sailed for England in 1899, pioneering Adventist medical work there.<sup>48</sup> Dr. Lauretta gave dress reform lectures to crowds of conservative women still wearing fashionable, heavy corsets. On two occasions the women became so curious about her dress and slip that she obligingly took them off for inspection, continuing to speak to them "in my under suite and pink elastics."<sup>49</sup>

After their eldest daughter's death and Dr. Daniel's illness, they returned to the United States to recuperate. But late in 1900 they traveled to Australia and New Zealand for seven years of mission service.

When the Washington Sanitarium and Hospital opened in Takoma Park, Maryland, in 1907, Dr. Daniel became the first medical director, and Dr. Lauretta served as the first surgeon.<sup>50</sup> Dr. Lauretta reputedly delivered more than 5,000 babies during her career.<sup>51</sup>

**Florence Armstrong Keller** (1875-1974) moved with her family from Arkansas to Washington State by covered wagon in about 1885. There her father assisted in constructing Walla Walla College, and she became a member of the first class to register in the new college.<sup>52</sup> Later she graduated from Kellogg's American Medical Missionary College.

In 1901 Florence set off for mission service in New Zealand. She had been preceded by her college sweetheart, Dr. Peter Martin Keller. After their marriage, they served together 19 years in New Zealand, and, like the Kresses, had a reputation as an impressive medical duo. In their pioneer work, Dr. Florence became physician for the Maori royal family.

Later, as a member of the College of Medical Evangelists' faculty, she was influential in raising funds to build the White Memorial Medical Center, which opened in 1918. An active physician for 67 years, she continued doing surgery and seeing patients six days a week until she was 92.<sup>53</sup>

Missionaries and nurses who trained at Battle Creek fanned out around the world, ably using their skills, as Ellen White had predicted, to become the "right arm" of the church. The compound noun "medical missionary" would be a part of the Adventist vocabulary for decades to come.

Perhaps some of Ellen White's conviction about medical work sprang from her own firsthand observation, during her Australian years, of how simple treatments could save lives and dissipate opposition to Adventism. Sara McEnterfer (1854-1936) was a Battle Creek nurse who began working for Ellen White in 1882 when she was 28. She joined Mrs. White in Australia in 1885. With no physician living closer to Cooranbong than 30 miles, Sara's nursing skills constituted the sole medical service for the entire area.<sup>54</sup>

In 1897 Ellen White noted in her diary many of the lifesaving treatments Sara performed.<sup>55</sup> Sizing up the needs, she proposed building a hospital there. "The hospital must go right up, else we fear we shall bury Sara. She is supposed to be the most successful physician in treating the sick. She has been working over the sick night and day, and she is very much worn."<sup>56</sup> Shortly afterward, the Australasian Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association announced plans for a school of nursing in 1899.<sup>57</sup>

### Education

*"Why should not women cultivate the intellect? Why*

*should they not answer the purpose of God in their existence? Why may they not understand their own powers, and realizing that these powers are given of God, strive to make use of them to the fullest extent in doing good to others, in advancing the work of reform, of truth and real goodness in the world?"*<sup>58</sup>

*"The Lord will use intelligent women in the work of teaching. And let none feel that these women, who understand the Word, and who have ability to teach, should not receive remuneration for their labors. They should be paid as verily as are their husbands. There is a great work for women to do in the cause of present truth. Through the exercise of womanly tact and wise use of their knowledge of Bible truth, they can remove difficulties that our brethren cannot meet."*<sup>59</sup>

Teenagers and young adults contributed significant leadership to the developing Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 1840s and 1850s. Ellen Harmon was only 17 when she received her first vision in December 1844. She married James White when she was 19 and he was 25. John Nevins Andrews was ordained as a minister in 1853 when he was 24. Uriah Smith became editor of the *Review and Herald* in 1855 with two years of experience on the staff; he was 23. After a two-year medical course, John Harvey Kellogg, 24, was appointed superintendent of the 10-year-old Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek.

This may help account for education's being a late-bloomer among Adventist reform initiatives. But eventually the pioneers, while hoping and praying for Jesus' soon return, had to face the issue of whether or not to educate their own children.<sup>60</sup>

Martha Byington figured in the first school experiment among Adventist Sabbathkeepers. Her father, John Byington, began to keep the Sabbath in 1852 after reading an early copy of the *Review and Herald*. James and Ellen White visited their home in Buck's Bridge, New York. About 1853 Byington encouraged Martha, age 19, to teach school for the children of Sabbathkeepers in that area. Martha had more

than a dozen pupils in a school that met for one year in the Aaron Hilliards' parlor.<sup>61</sup>

But Adventism's real commitment to education came in 1872 at Battle Creek. The first year the school opened under the name Battle Creek College, **Eva Perkins Miller Hankins** (1858-1942) enrolled as a student. In 1879 she married Eli B. Miller and graduated from the college in 1880. Eva and Eli taught at Battle Creek for the next 12 years. In 1892 the Millers were among those to go to Africa as the church's first missionaries in the field of education. During three years there, Eva at times served as bookkeeper, teacher, preceptress, and matron of the Claremont Union College (forerunner of Helderberg College), while Eli was president. Later, they worked briefly at Walla Walla and Union colleges.

After Eli's death in 1900, Eva resumed teaching in Battle Creek. In 1903 she married Ira J. Hankins. Eva worked briefly in the Indiana Conference as educational secretary before she and Ira returned to Africa, where she became educational secretary of the union and assistant editor of the *South African Sentinel*.<sup>62</sup>

**Flora Harriet Lampson Williams** (1865-1944), whose family moved to Battle Creek about 1877, attended Battle Creek College and began a career in public school teaching. She was called to Keene, Texas, in 1894, where Adventists had bought 800 acres of land and were establishing a school to serve the Southwest. Under Mrs. Williams' guidance the school began training elementary teachers in 1897.

In 1910 Mrs. Williams was called to head three conference-level departments in western Michigan—education, Missionary Volunteer, and Sabbath school. She began a 20-year career in the General Conference in 1921 as an assistant secretary in the Education Department, assisting Arthur W. Spalding, head of the Home Commission. In this capacity she also edited *Home and School* magazine until it was discontinued in 1937.<sup>63</sup>

The 10 years that **Sarah Elizabeth Peck** (1868-1968) spent working on Ellen White's staff strongly influenced her contribution to Adventist education. Sarah was interested in

elementary school teaching, but the three or four schools the church had established before her graduation from Battle Creek College in 1888 were at the academy or college level. Her first job was at the Minnesota Conference School in Minneapolis, the forerunner of Maplewood Academy.<sup>64</sup>

Later, Sarah sailed for Cape Town, South Africa, to teach at Claremont Union College, the first Adventist college to be established outside the United States. In 1896 she became the third principal of Claremont Union College, following Eli Miller and Nellie Rankin Druillard.<sup>65</sup>

In 1898 she accepted a call to Australia, after church leaders finally consented to Ellen White's third request for her assistance. According to Sarah's account of the first evening she joined the staff for evening worship, Mrs. White said, "You should have been here six years ago."

Sarah returned to the United States with Ellen White in 1900, but became increasingly involved in educational pursuits. She assisted in the preparation of the book *Education*, which was published in 1903; taught the Sanitarium School in Elmshaven in 1904;<sup>66</sup> and in 1906 began writing the durable *True Education Readers* series.

From 1908 to 1914 she taught in the Normal Department at Union College. She returned to California to be superintendent of education in that conference for two years, and concluded her career in the GC Education Department.<sup>67</sup>

Adventist work among Blacks did not begin until Edson White founded the Southern Missionary Society in the early 1890s. During this time he launched the *Morning Star*, a Mississippi riverboat.<sup>68</sup> **Anna Knight** (1874-1972), however, read herself into the Adventist faith by accident when someone, responding to her request for reading materials, sent her *Signs of the Times*. The daughter of ex-slave sharecroppers, Anna was not permitted to go to the Whites-only school. Through incredible determination she educated herself.

With the help of Adventist friends, Anna attended Mount Vernon Academy in 1894; in 1898 she graduated from Battle Creek College as a missionary nurse, and returned to her people in Mississippi, building a self-supporting school for

Black children in Jasper County.

Attending the 1901 General Conference, Anna learned of a need for nurses in India, and became a missionary there for six years. But the work she had begun in Jasper County faltered, so she returned to rebuild it more firmly. In 1909 she moved to Atlanta to do nursing, teaching, and Bible work; later she worked in the local conference education department.<sup>69</sup>

W. W. Prescott's name is practically synonymous with Adventist education. But also important was the influence of his wife, Sara F. Sanders Prescott (1856-1910), whose own educational experience included studies at Harvard University "as a nonresident student, taking a part of the woman's course." A. G. Daniells recalled that during the nine years Prescott was president of Battle Creek College, his wife "was closely associated with him in the educational work, sometimes as teacher, and always active in sharing the heavy burdens of the school."<sup>70</sup>

The life of Bessie DeGraw Sutherland (1871-1965) begs interpretive research. She was a member of the reform-minded triumvirate that included E. A. Sutherland and Percy T. Magan. She assisted Sutherland in administrative responsibilities when they first worked together at Walla Walla College (1894-1896), and later at Battle Creek College (1897-1901), where Magan was a Bible and history teacher.

The three were influential in reestablishing the school as Emmanuel Missionary College in rural Berrien Springs. Together they founded Madison College in 1904, backed by Ellen White's encouragement and Nellie Rankin Druillard's investments. DeGraw stayed by the missionary-minded, self-supporting college, completing a Ph.D. when she was 61.

In 1953 Sutherland's wife of more than 60 years, Sally Bralliar, died. The following year Bessie married her long-time colleague; she was 83 and he 89.<sup>71</sup>

### Frontier Missionaries

*"The Lord will help those who will use their God-intrusted capabilities to His name's glory. Will our young*



*men and young women who believe the truth become living missionaries?"*<sup>72</sup>

*"The church of Christ was organized for missionary purposes. . . . In every age since the advent of Christ, the gospel commission has impelled men and women to go to the ends of the earth to carry the good news of salvation to those in darkness."*<sup>73</sup>

Not having formally organized as a church until 1863, Seventh-day Adventists focused their energy on preaching their distinctive beliefs and establishing their own identity rather than doing much outreach. An article in the April 16, 1872, *Review and Herald* gave the opinion that "the whole heathen world is dotted with missions. . . . Three fourths of the earth's surface is under Christian government and influence," and "the missionaries that have been, now for half a century, at work have leavened almost every quarter of the globe." The author concluded, "This looks very much as though the above prophecy [Matt. 24:14] were about fulfilled."

But gradually the Adventist conscience was awakened and the sense of world mission began to grow. As this happened, women were among the first to the frontiers.

Single and having less than a dollar in her purse, **Georgia Burrus Burgess** (1866-1948) sat on her trunk in Battle Creek, ready to go to India. She had heard that Dr. J. H. Kellogg advised the mission board against sending her, believing she could not endure the tropical heat. She feared that if she were to now ask for an advance, the board would cancel her appointment.

Fortunately, W. H. Hall, steward of the sanitarium, looked her up and pressed \$80 into her hands as a farewell gift.<sup>74</sup> Georgia Burrus arrived in Calcutta in January 1895. She worked there most of the next 40 years, and for most of that time pioneering among non-Christians. Alone and self-supporting during the first year, she studied the Bengali language. With a young woman, one of her first converts, Georgia opened a school for Hindu girls. Through these school contracts she eventually gained entrance into

some Hindu homes, where the women were kept in strict seclusion.

In 1903 she married Luther Burgess, secretary-treasurer of the newly established India Mission. He resigned his conference position and they set out together to reach the 80 million people who spoke Hindustani.

In the process, Luther's health broke. Georgia brought him back to the United States, but never flagged in her determination to get back to India. Reportedly, she helped sell 20,000 copies of Stephen Haskell's new journal *The Bible Training School* at 10 cents each to pay their way back and help establish the Hindustani work.<sup>75</sup>

Once additional missionaries joined them or nationals were trained, Georgia and Luther moved on, this time to work among the Khasi people. They retired in 1935, when Georgia was 69.

Hattie André (1865-1952) was another single woman who became a pioneer missionary. In 1893, with seven other Adventists, she sailed on the second voyage of the *Pitcairn*. She was miserable most of the 33-day trip, being, in her own words, "the poorest of sailors."<sup>76</sup>

Upon arrival, Hattie remained on the tiny mountainous island teaching school, beginning with 41 pupils. Several of her *Pitcairn* companions went to other assignments in the South Pacific.<sup>77</sup> She recorded her loneliness much later: "Usually ships visited the island only when they were blown out of their course, and seldom did they have any mail for the islanders. I was on Pitcairn Island one entire year without receiving a single letter from home."<sup>78</sup>

When Hattie returned to the United States in 1896, she did Bible work briefly in Kentucky. That same year Oakwood College opened, with 16 Black students; she was one of the three White teachers in the new institution, and she stayed three years.

Meanwhile, from Australia Ellen White wrote Hattie André a personal letter, urging her to consider mission service there, and she accepted.<sup>79</sup> After eight years in Australia, Hattie André joined in pioneering the beginnings of Pacific

Union College on Howell Mountain, Angwin, California.<sup>80</sup> Eleven years later, she took an early retirement to care for her aging mother, and moved to Hinsdale, Illinois.<sup>81</sup>

Lucy Post (1845-1937), eleventh in a family of 14 children, grew up knowing little else but frontier life. The family moved by oxcart from Wisconsin to Minnesota, where Sioux Indian children were her only friends. She had no chance for formal education until she was 12, and did not become a Seventh-day Adventist until she was 35.

A few years after her baptism, Lucy was introduced to Ellen White at a general meeting. "Post, did you say?" asked Mrs. White. "Post is a good strong name. My sister, may you ever be a pillar in the house of our Lord." After studying at the Chicago Mission, Lucy became a successful Bible worker in the Minnesota, Dakota, and Ohio conferences.

At age 50 Lucy Post volunteered to go to South America with the first missionaries sent by the General Conference. More than 40 years earlier, Lucy's older brother Zina had emigrated to South America. On July 26, 1895, she found him in Uruguay and began sharing her beliefs with his family and friends. Several were among the first Sabbathkeepers in the area. She remained in South America, working primarily in the English-speaking populations, until 1902.<sup>82</sup>

After returning to the United States, she went to Idaho where a brother helped her homestead 160 acres. By horse and buggy she also took up Bible work for the conference and kept actively engaged in such work until she was 70.<sup>83</sup>

### Evangelism and Pastoral Ministry

*"It was Mary who first preached a risen Jesus; and the refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth now. If there were twenty women where now there is one who would make the saving of souls their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. Zealous and continued diligence in the cause of God would be wholly successful, and would astonish them with its results."*<sup>84</sup>

From the beginning of the Advent movement, women's

participation was significant enough that some worried it would discredit the movement itself. The Methodists, Baptists, and others faced a similar dilemma. In revivals that swept the country, women as well as men responded to the call to forsake their sins and be converted. They soon wanted to witness for Christ openly in meetings. To resolve the tension between this conviction that they *must* speak and social conventions that *denied* them public leadership, prayer and Bible study groups for women only became quite widespread. Ellen White's own ministry was born in such a setting.

But more and more often women preachers addressed "promiscuous" (male and female) crowds, and carried on an effective ministry. While none of these Adventist women evangelists are listed in the *SDA Encyclopedia*, research suggests they had a definite impact on the nineteenth-century church.

In 1868 Elbert B. and Ellen S. Lane sold their Michigan farm, and both began to preach. That year, according to historian Bert Haloviak, Ellen Lane became the first Adventist woman to receive a ministerial license.<sup>85</sup>

The Lanes held revivals and tent meetings in Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, and Tennessee. Ellen was a powerful preacher. One Sabbath morning in Virginia, her husband spoke to 35 listeners; the next day a crowd of 650 gathered to hear her.<sup>86</sup>

Haloviak states that "the 'license to preach' or 'ministerial license' was taken very seriously by the denomination, since it was seen as the route to the full ordination and reception of ministerial credentials." In 1878 the General Conference session voted a resolution that "those who apply for a license to preach the third angel's message should, before they receive a license, be examined by a competent committee in regard to their doctrinal and educational qualifications."<sup>87</sup> A few days later, Ellen Lane's license was renewed by the Michigan Conference. She and Elbert worked in a team ministry until his death in 1881, and she continued on alone until 1889.<sup>88</sup>

**Sarah A. Hallock Lindsey** converted to Adventism about 1860, and married lay preacher John Lindsey a few years later. Their ministry, according to historian Brian Strayer, played a key role in holding churches together in Pennsylvania and New York during a time of apostasy and lack of leadership.<sup>89</sup>

In the disarray that followed Nathan Fuller's fall from the conference presidency because of adultery, Sarah and John visited scattered churches, encouraging the believers. The conference recognized their efforts in 1872 by licensing them both. The Lindseys thus became two of five licentiates in the conference. All were to preach, hold evangelistic meetings, and lead out in church business and committee sessions.<sup>90</sup>

**Hattie Enoch** received her license to preach in Kansas in 1879.<sup>91</sup> Her effectiveness did not go unnoticed by the visiting GC president, G. I. Butler. Reporting to Ellen White the promising revival work of licentiates, Butler wrote that "among these are Marshall Enoch and his wife, who is a public speaker who labors with her husband. Elder Cook [Kansas minister, soon to become president of the conference] thinks she is a better laborer in such things than any minister in the state."<sup>92</sup> Hattie and Marshall later pioneered the work in Bermuda.<sup>93</sup>

In the nine-year period between 1896 and 1905, **Lulu Wightman** raised up 12 churches in New York State. She was licensed in 1898. Six years later, her husband was also licensed; together they established another five churches. Haloviak suggests that this "would rank her not only as the most outstanding evangelist in New York State during her time, but among the most successful within the denomination for any time period."<sup>94</sup>

S. M. Cobb, a minister and contemporary of Mrs. Wightman, observed in an 1897 letter that "a good lady worker will accomplish as much good as the best men we have got, and I am more and more convinced that it is so. Look at Sister Lulu W.'s work; she has accomplished more in the last two years than any minister in this state." In 1903 a statistical secretary in the General Conference confirmed this.

At the time, New York had 11 ministers and two Bible workers. But 60 percent of the new converts were won by two ministers (the Wightmans) and one Bible worker, Mrs. D. D. Smith.

Mrs. Wightman became widely known outside the denominational circles for her advocacy of religious liberty. Her husband reported one occasion in 1909 when she addressed the House of Representatives in the Missouri legislature on "The Rise of Religious Liberty in the United States." Unfortunately, the Wightmans became discouraged and did not remain in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>95</sup>

Minnie Day Sype (1869-1956) converted to Adventism through her father-in-law, J. L. Sype, in 1889. In 1902 her husband, Logan, moved the family from Iowa to a frontier area in western Oklahoma. During a bitter winter, they lost their livestock and sold most of their belongings just to buy food—but they raised up a new church. She invited the conference president to come and organize the group. Afterward, to her surprise, she received a check for \$25 from the conference and an invitation for her husband and herself to evangelize full time.<sup>96</sup>

Even on the frontier she encountered opposition as a woman preacher. Feeling overwhelmed with despair, she told the Lord, "I can never do this." "But while I was crying and praying to God a strong impression came over me—I knew it was from God—'My strength is sufficient.' I got up from my knees determined to do whatsoever my hands found to do and leave the result with God. However I was criticized, I would not refuse the call of God."<sup>97</sup>

In following her promise to do "whatsoever," Mrs. Sype walked and traveled by horse and buggy, covered wagon, and train—all to preach, give Bible studies, hold public debates with other ministers, lead tent meetings, sell books and magazines, and collect Ingathering funds. In 1906 the Sypes returned to Iowa at the strong invitation of the conference president there.<sup>98</sup>

In later years Mrs. Sype became a conference home missionary secretary and did missionary work in the Baha-

mas. Over her lifetime as an evangelist and pastor, she also worked in Pennsylvania, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Florida.<sup>99</sup>

### Ellen White's Personal Staff

*"I have been reading some chapters of the book on education. Sister Peck has been gathering this matter from a mass of my writings, carefully selecting precious bits here and there, and placing them together in harmonious order."<sup>100</sup>*

*"I read over all that is copied, to see that everything is as it should be. I read all the book manuscript before it is sent to the printer."<sup>101</sup>*

The group of women who worked personally for Ellen White seem usually to have been lost in the shadows or, on occasion, have been paraded in the high powered spotlight of criticism. Fortunately, Arthur White's six-volume biography of his grandmother opens to the general reader glimpses into these relationships that involved employment, shared beliefs, common domestic circumstances, and genuine friendship.

Three who deserve attention are Sarah Peck, Sara McEnterfer, and Marian Davis.

**Sarah Elizabeth Peck** (1868-1968) devoted most of her life to education. But she joined Mrs. White in Australia. She spent most of the first year classifying and organizing her employer's writings. Mrs. White brought box after box of typed pages to the living room, emptied them on the floor, and said, "Now this is your job. Rearrange these copies so that I can find whatever writings I need." Sarah Peck's work is still the backbone of the indexing system used in the White Estate today.<sup>102</sup>

Bridging the last few months in Australia and the return to the United States in 1900, Sarah spent considerable time over a four-year period assisting Mrs. White in organizing material for the book *Education*, which was published in 1903. After 10 years working with Mrs. White, Sarah returned to full-time teaching in 1907, heading the normal department at Union College.<sup>103</sup>

**Sara McEnterfer** (1854-1936), who scarcely gets a men-

tion in the *SDA Encyclopedia*, worked for Mrs. White from within a few months after James's death until Ellen died, 33 years later. Ellen White describes Sara as "my companion in travel. While we are on our journeys, she takes charge of all the business. She also gives me treatment. She is a trained nurse."<sup>104</sup>

When Ellen White went to Europe in 1885, Sara helped her with writing and editing, using the calligraph [typewriter] "with good effect."<sup>105</sup> Even when Mrs. White was bedridden she at times would dictate letters to Sara.<sup>106</sup> Sara took down Mrs. White's speeches and sermons in shorthand and later wrote them out.<sup>107</sup>

Mrs. White went to Australia in 1891 and Sara joined her there in 1895. In 1897, during a lull in the building of Avondale College, Ellen White called a work bee and offered Sara's services. Although one of the men made "depreciatory remarks" about "lady carpenters," Mrs. White reported to Willie that "no one to whom these words were addressed responded." Later, some admitted that "the women's diligent work had done more to inspire diligence in the men at work than any talk or ordering."<sup>108</sup>

In 1900 Sara moved with Ellen White to Elmshaven in northern California. Willie White observed, "Sara McEnterfer, besides acting as nurse, teamster, and generalissimo, is doing faithful work as Mother's secretary. She reads and answers . . . letters which she [EGW] has no time to deal with, and answers many other letters according to Mother's instructions."<sup>109</sup>

Marian Davis (1847-1904) was Ellen White's major assistant in producing several books, including *The Desire of Ages*, *The Ministry of Healing*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *The Great Controversy*, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, and *Steps to Christ*. In fact, Mrs. White called her "my bookmaker."<sup>110</sup>

Marian's mother had been baptized by Joseph Bates about 1868, and the family moved to Battle Creek. After teaching school and working as a proofreader at the Review and Herald, Marian began working for the Whites.



The focus of Marian's work was organizational and editorial. As Ellen White explained the interactive process to G. A. Irwin, Marian "takes my articles which are published in our papers, and pastes them in blank books. She also has a copy of all the letters I write. In preparing a chapter for a book, Marian remembers that I have written something on that special point, which may make the matter more forcible. She begins search for this, and if when she finds it, she sees that it will make the chapter more clear, she adds it.

"The books are not Marian's productions, but my own, gathered from all my writings. Marian has a large field from which to draw, and her ability to arrange the matter is of great value to me. It saves me poring over a great mass of matter, which I have no time to do."<sup>111</sup>

Marian was a perfectionist, with the advantages and drawbacks of such a personality. At one point in the preparation of *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White wrote wearily that Marian was overwhelming Willie and her with checking details. "Sometimes I think she will kill us both, all unnecessarily, with her little things she can just as well settle herself as to bring them before us. Every little change of a word she wants us to see. I am about tired of this business."<sup>112</sup>

Nevertheless, Mrs. White acknowledged and appreciated Marian's tireless efforts. After Marian contracted tuberculosis in 1903, Ellen White wrote to her several times, offering encouragement and advice: "Let not one anxious thought come into your mind. . . . I will see that all bills of expense shall be settled." Then she added, "As long as I and you shall live, my home is your home."

"Please eat," Mrs. White urged Marian. As time passed and the situation grew more bleak, she said, "Marian, if you go before I do, we shall know each other *there*. . . . Lay your poor, nervous hand in His firm hand and let Him hold you and strengthen you, cheer and comfort you . . . Oh, I wish I were with you this moment! In much love."<sup>113</sup>

### Conclusion

What has been presented in the preceding pages is but a

glimpse into the lives and work of selected women who helped to build up the church that we know, love, and serve. They are the most notable among a host of female achievers. Each of our lives has been affected by their accomplishments and attainments. They have labored on many fronts and in many roles. What has been presented is but a small tribute to those distinguished and unsung heroines who persisted in their struggles against challenges of all kinds, and who achieved for themselves and for us all!

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Matilda Erickson Andross, *Story of the Advent Message* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1926).

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 3, p. 194.

<sup>3</sup> ———, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> *Australasian Record*, June 7, 1937, pp. 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> "Obituaries," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 3, 1924, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> White, *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> Ella M. Robinson, S. N. Haskell, *Man of Action* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1967), pp. 25-28.

<sup>8</sup> John G. Beach, *Notable Women of Spirit* (Nashville, Southern Pub. Assn., 1976), pp. 25, 26.

<sup>9</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., rev. 1976), p. 1150.

<sup>10</sup> Robinson, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Australian Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1983), pp. 294-297. (See also E. G. White letter 152, 1897.)

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>13</sup> *The SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1224.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Robert G. Wearner, "Lucy Post: Pioneer Pillar in Adventist Missions," *Adventist Review*, Mar. 3, 1988, pp. 19, 20.

<sup>16</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1139.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen G. White letter 54, 1899.

<sup>18</sup> Supplement included in the *Review and Herald*, Dec. 6, 1898, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1961), vol. 3, p. 200.

<sup>20</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 399, 36.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1169, 772.

<sup>22</sup> *Review and Herald*, Oct. 24, 1918, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), pp. 164, 165.

<sup>24</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1629.

<sup>25</sup> Spalding, vol. 2, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 586.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1292.

<sup>28</sup> Two women currently serve as General Conference department heads: Shirley Burton, Communication, and Rose Otis, Office of Women's Ministries.

<sup>29</sup> Flora L. Plummer, undated and unpublished autobiography (probably written in 1939).

Held at the E. G. White Research Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Document File 1346, p. 5. See also *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1129.

- <sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 491.
- <sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Welfare Ministry*, p. 158.
- <sup>12</sup> *Review and Herald*, Nov. 12, 1872, p. 176.
- <sup>13</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1353; *Review and Herald*, Mar. 15, 1934, p. 23.
- <sup>14</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 256; *Review and Herald*, Jan. 3, 1924, p. 22.
- <sup>15</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1477, 1478; *Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1940.
- <sup>16</sup> R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1979), pp. 565, 566, 245, 247.
- <sup>17</sup> Spalding, vol. 2, p. 45.
- <sup>18</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 402, 1221.
- <sup>19</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), pp. 506, 507.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84.
- <sup>21</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 575.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 136.
- <sup>23</sup> Letter from John Harvey Kellogg to Mary E. Lamson, Feb. 2, 1922. Copy in the Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.
- <sup>24</sup> Kathryn Jensen Nelson, *Kate Lindsay, M.D.* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1963), pp. 29-36.
- <sup>25</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 176.
- <sup>26</sup> Lauretta Kress, *Under the Guiding Hand* (Washington, D.C.: College Press, 1941), p. 108.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-78.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- <sup>30</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1572.
- <sup>31</sup> *Review and Herald*, Aug. 25, 1955.
- <sup>32</sup> *Review and Herald*, Apr. 4, 1974.
- <sup>33</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 722.
- <sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White letter 363, 1907.
- <sup>35</sup> Arthur L. White, pp. 329, 330.
- <sup>36</sup> Ellen G. White letter 73, 1899.
- <sup>37</sup> Arthur L. White, pp. 428-432.
- <sup>38</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 467.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 491; also, Ellen G. White letter 142, 1909.
- <sup>40</sup> George Knight, ed., *Early Adventist Educators* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1983), pp. 1-10.
- <sup>41</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 210, 36; *Review and Herald*, Mar. 25, 1937, p. 23; June 22, 1944, pp. 6, 7.
- <sup>42</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1100, 556.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1610, 1406; *Review and Herald*, Jan. 18, 1945, p. 20.
- <sup>44</sup> Spalding, vol. 2, p. 47; *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 852.
- <sup>45</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 579.
- <sup>46</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 3, pp. 214-226.
- <sup>47</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1085.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 928, 1396, 1397.
- <sup>49</sup> Anna Knight, *Mississippi Girl* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952); *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 743.
- <sup>50</sup> *Review and Herald*, June 23, 1910, p. 23.
- <sup>51</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1442; Warren S. Ashworth, "Edward A. Sutherland, Reformer," Knight, pp. 180, 181.
- <sup>52</sup> Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1930), p. 197.
- <sup>53</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 464.

- <sup>74</sup> Ava M. Covington Wall, *They Also Served* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1976), pp. 65-79.
- <sup>75</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 204.
- <sup>76</sup> Carol Crider, "Hattie André: Pioneer Missionary" (unpublished manuscript, 1979; based on materials held in the Pitcairn Collection, Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan).
- <sup>77</sup> *Review and Herald*, Oct. 17, 1893.
- <sup>78</sup> Myrna Beth George, "Pioneer Women," *Youth's Instructor*, June 7, 1932, p. 3.
- <sup>79</sup> Ellen G. White letter 197, 1899.
- <sup>80</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 43.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1139.
- <sup>83</sup> Some of this information was drawn from an unpublished life sketch of Lucy Post written by her niece, Frances M. Kennedy.
- <sup>84</sup> Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry*, p. 146.
- <sup>85</sup> Bert Haloviak, "Adventist Heritage Calls for Ordination of Women," *Spectrum* 16, No. 3 (August 1985): 52.
- <sup>86</sup> Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1979), p. 135.
- <sup>87</sup> Haloviak, p. 52; *Review and Herald*, Oct. 17, 1878, pp. 122, 124.
- <sup>88</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 763; Haloviak, pp. 52, 53.
- <sup>89</sup> Brian Strayer, in *Adventist Heritage* 11: No. 2 (Fall 1986): 18-24.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- <sup>91</sup> See Haloviak, pp. 53, 60.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- <sup>93</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 150.
- <sup>94</sup> Haloviak, p. 54.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- <sup>96</sup> Minnie Sype, *Life Sketches and Experiences in Missionary Work* (Hutchinson, Minn.: Seminary Press, 1916), pp. 31, 33, 62, 70; *Review and Herald*, Aug. 30, 1956, p. 27.
- <sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 72.
- <sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-101.
- <sup>99</sup> *Review and Herald*, Aug. 30, 1956, p. 27.
- <sup>100</sup> Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmhaven Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1981), p. 180.
- <sup>101</sup> Ellen G. White letter 133, 1902.
- <sup>102</sup> *Review and Herald*, Mar. 19, 1964, p. 9.
- <sup>103</sup> Shirley Annette Welch, "The Life and Writings of Sarah Elizabeth Peck" (unpublished manuscript, Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1977), *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1085.
- <sup>104</sup> Ellen G. White letter 133, 1902.
- <sup>105</sup> Ellen G. White manuscript 16a, 1885; see also Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Lonely Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1984), p. 291.
- <sup>106</sup> Arthur L. White, *The Lonely Years*, p. 339.
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 339, 340.
- <sup>108</sup> Arthur L. White, *The Australian Years*, pp. 297, 298.
- <sup>109</sup> William C. White letter, May 11, 1903.
- <sup>110</sup> Arthur L. White, *The Australian Years*, p. 381.
- <sup>111</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 91.
- <sup>112</sup> Ellen G. White letter 64a, 1889.
- <sup>113</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 251-254.

## CHAPTER 3

# Women's Leadership, 1915-1970: The Waning Years

*BERTHA DASHER*

**I**n a period such as ours today, when women have been seen with increasing frequency in positions of leadership in widely diverse spheres of American life—even on a major political party's national ticket—the above chapter title may seem curious. But the reality is that during the same decades when American women were gaining legal, educational, financial, and professional recognition, women within the Seventh-day Adventist Church steadily lost leadership positions.

Historically, when churchmen have used the work of women, they have convinced women of their great responsibility for lost souls.<sup>1</sup> In the earlier days of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, women who were persuaded of that responsibility, armed with the strength of their convictions, including a firm belief in the soon return of Jesus and the end of the world, assumed leadership roles in the new organizational structures. The church was small and struggling, and women leaders with talent and ability were needed to carry on the work of the Lord. While Ellen White was not an

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<sup>1</sup> Bertha Dasher is a dental hygienist in Battle Ground, Washington. She has an M.A.V. in Values from San Francisco Theological Seminary.

ardent feminist, her capable and visible guidance carried an example of female leadership that was an inspiration to many Seventh-day Adventist women. Exposure to the able leadership of this capable and articulate woman empowered many other women to take on leadership roles. (See chapter 2 for a sense of how many women were engaged in such roles.)

During the years 1920-1950, women who worked with selfless devotion seem to have been convinced (how easily is hard to judge) that the best interests of the church would be served by their being replaced by male ordained ministers. In the 1960s, however, the beginning of change in cultural attitudes toward women, and the expanded areas opened to them, inspired some women to prepare themselves to answer God's call.

The factors that have contributed to the waning of women's participation in church leadership are many and complex, but four stand out as significant. Probably the number one factor was the death of Ellen White in 1915. She had provided a strong role model for women. A second important factor was the rising number of professionally trained male ministers. A third factor was the continuing increase in the wealth of the church, with more institutions and larger budgets, which increased the power of the decision-makers.<sup>2</sup> A fourth was a renewed emphasis on the home, and the concept of motherhood as the most fulfilling role for women.

While the Great Depression, which began in 1929, had a huge impact on the church so far as the loss of leadership opportunities for women was concerned, it only accelerated the trend that had begun in 1920.<sup>3</sup> The women who remained in church employment during the Depression were in positions of lower status and less authority than formerly. Both single and married women were limited largely to teaching, nursing, and Bible worker positions. Women with leadership ability were forced to the sidelines.

The field of education has traditionally been an arena of service for SDA women. In 1920 women held the leadership post in education departments in 57 percent of the confer-

ences. By 1930 that figure had dropped to 23 percent, by 1940 to 5 percent, and by 1950 there were no women in administrative leadership in education departments in any conference in North America.

Women continue to be involved in Adventist education, however. Rochelle Philmon Kilgore's career is surely one of the most remarkable in the denomination. She began her teaching in Georgia before completing her own secondary education. She was appointed educational secretary of the Louisiana Conference, and in 1916 became principal of Graysville Academy in Tennessee. She taught English and Latin at Union College in the 1920s. One of her students remembers that she had a story for every Latin vocabulary word, which made learning easy. For more than 20 years she chaired the English Department at Atlantic Union College, where she continues to live. She is dearly loved by hundreds of former students.

Many Adventist women entered the teaching profession as elementary school teachers in church schools. Enid Sparks began teaching in Idaho in 1920, moved to the Upper Columbia Conference in 1924, taught at Walla Walla College, wrote two books for schoolchildren, and continued teaching in small church schools long past retirement age.

Some women taught a year or two, married, raised a family, and then returned to teaching. Esther Sparhawk Wood followed that route. She began teaching in 1930, left to raise her family, and returned to her profession in 1948. She completed her degree at Walla Walla College at the age of 62, and then spent two years in Haiti as an elementary school teacher for missionary children. Even after her "retirement" she continued teaching and tutoring in both church and public schools.

Anna Knight was an eager, intelligent child in Mississippi who longed to learn to read and write. There were no formal educational opportunities open to her, but on Sundays she was allowed to play with some White neighbor children who shared with her the basics of reading and spelling. Because

she had no writing materials, she practiced by scratching with a stick in the dirt.

The *Signs of the Times* was sent to her by a stranger, and through reading it she became a Seventh-day Adventist. With the help of friends she was able to attend Mount Vernon Academy and then Battle Creek College, where she graduated as a missionary nurse. She returned to her Mississippi home and began a school for poor Black children.

From 1901 to 1907 she served as a missionary in India, returning when called by the Southeastern Union to work in Atlanta as a nurse, teacher, and Bible worker. She served in the union educational department until 1940, when she went to the General Conference North American Negro Department. Before her death in 1972 at the age of 98, she was awarded the Medallion of Merit Award for her years of service in Seventh-day Adventist education.

Interestingly, many women in teaching were married to ministers or other teachers. Their salaries were extremely small, sometimes nonexistent.

Even the education of women, however, seems to have been adversely affected during the years 1920 to 1970. For example, in 1920 women comprised 48 percent of Walla Walla's graduating class. This figure suggests that nearly as many women as men expected to find fulfillment in professions and in leadership positions, for at that time a college degree was tantamount to such positions. In 1930, 31 percent of the WWC graduates were women. It is probable that during the Depression years because of economic conditions more young women than men had to sacrifice higher education. In 1940, 38 percent of the graduates were women, as recovery from the Depression began. But in 1950, after men who had served in the military in World War II began to take advantage of the GI bill of rights, only 26 percent of WWC's graduating class were women. The figure rose to 30 percent by 1960, still far from the highwater mark of 1920.

Perhaps an even more natural place for Seventh-day Adventist women to focus their interest was in the Sabbath school work. In 1920 more than 90 percent of the confer-



ences had a woman as Sabbath School Department director. These women developed and shaped the Sabbath school system that we still know today. In 1921 Bertie Richards, the mother of H.M.S. Richards, held the Sabbath School Department leadership in the Texico Conference, where her husband was the conference president. Later she held the same position in Arkansas. In the same decade, Mary Hopkins led the Sabbath school work in Minnesota, and Nannie May Smith in Mississippi and Tennessee.

By 1930 just 70 percent of the conferences had women in Sabbath School Department leadership positions. In Oregon, Edith Starbuck continued her work on into the 1930s, and Flora Dorcas, wife of an ordained minister in the conference, headed the Sabbath school work in Iowa.

During the decade of the 1940s, the decline in women's participation in Sabbath school administration accelerated. Ernestine Hochschorner, who had held the Sabbath school leadership position in several conferences in the Columbia Union since 1925, lost her office in 1945. Edith Shephard, in Michigan, and Sybil King, in Pennsylvania, also left their positions in 1945.

By 1950 there were no women in salaried positions in Sabbath School Department leadership in any conference in North America. However, all over the country, in large and small churches, hundreds of dedicated women were doing Sabbath school work in their home churches, in branch Sabbath schools, and in Vacation Bible Schools. They encouraged the Sabbath school members to undertake investment projects, to teach classes for both children and adults, to promote sacrificial giving for missions, and to perform a myriad of other tasks.

During her childhood Mary Neufield often said to herself, "When I grow up I will be a preacher." But as she grew older she came to realize that there was almost no opportunity for that to happen, so she determined to work for the Lord in any way she could.

When she graduated from Battleford Academy in Saskatchewan in 1925, she was hired by the Saskatchewan

Conference to be in charge of the Sabbath School Department. Her responsibilities included traveling around the conference to organize and promote Sabbath school work in the churches. She encouraged the Investment program, and trained Sabbath school teachers in both adult and children's departments. In order to interest the entire congregation in Sabbath school work, she often preached during the worship service. There were few ministers in the area, and she was well received.

After 20 years of departmental leadership in Western Canada, Mary felt that "the well had gone dry," that she needed more education. She went to Washington, D.C., in 1945 and attended the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. She supported herself by working as a Bible instructor. In 1951, after completing her seminary studies, she joined the chaplain's staff of Portland Sanitarium and Hospital, where she remained until her retirement.

In its early stages, while the Seventh-day Adventist Church was beginning to develop a professional, full-time ministry, this did not exclude nonordained individuals from participating in ministry and leadership. Thus for a number of women the door was open into ministerial leadership. In 1920 a few women were licensed, though not ordained, as ministers.

Winifred Rowell, professionally trained in theology, worked as a licensed minister in the Bermuda Mission. Returning to the United States, she taught ancient languages at Broadview College and Theological Seminary in La Grange, Illinois.

In 1920 Minnie Sype was a licensed minister in Iowa. Later she moved to Washington State, where stories are still told about how she organized the students at Auburn Academy for Ingathering in Seattle. A tireless fund-raiser, she worked along with the students. Her name appears in the *SDA Yearbook* until 1940, when she was retired with an honorary minister's license.

In 1984 the Association of Adventist Women, meeting for their national convention at Andrews University, presented

their Woman of the Year Award to Mary Walsh, then aged 94. The award honored her years of service to the Adventist Church as an evangelist, preacher, pastor, and Bible worker.

Born in England, she came to the United States at the age of 22. In a few months she became a Seventh-day Adventist "by reading herself into the church." Although timid about public speaking, she began preaching on Boston Common. She soon became an accomplished speaker, regularly invited to speak at camp meetings. During the Depression years, she received a minister's license and became pastor of the Hartford, Connecticut, church. In the 1950s she moved to California and spent the next 20 satisfying years teaching the laity with skill and devotion, watching their growth in ability and consecration.

It was not an easy life, however. "I was in a different church every week," she recalled. "I didn't unpack my suitcase for 30 years."

Another category of women's work that frequently involved pastoral duties was the licensed or credentialed Bible instructor's work. Mabel Vreeland held this license from 1922 to 1965; she was well known in New York state as a dynamic, energetic speaker. She served as a district leader for a number of years, competently pastoring several churches.

An interesting aspect of Seventh-day Adventist seminary education has been women teaching men to be preachers. In 1945 Louise Kleuser began teaching practical theology and homiletics at the seminary. She served as associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association and as one of the editors of *Ministry*. She was in that position at the time of her retirement in 1958.

In 1960 Leona Running began teaching biblical languages at the seminary, and in 1965 Elaine Giddings was a lecturer there.

Another important area of leadership open to women in the early days of the church was the post of conference secretary-treasurer. In 1920 women held that position in 16 percent of the local conferences, but by 1930 the figure had dropped to only 5 percent. This position was frequently held,

especially in small conferences or missions, by the wife of the conference president. It was in that capacity that Myrtle Wood and Mrs. E. E. Jensen served as secretary-treasurer in the Alaska Mission. During the 1920s and 1930s Cora Felker served as secretary-treasurer of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, and Mrs. Joseph Capman held that post in the Bermuda Mission.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth, professional fields opened to women that previously had been closed to them. Adventist women seized the opportunities that arose. Many women entered the field of medicine and began to serve the church as staff physicians in its hospitals, as medical missionaries, and on the faculty of the medical school.

Julia White, M.D., of Glendale, California, was a member of the Medical Missionary Department of the General Conference during the 1920s. Elizabeth Hiscox, M.D., in the 1930s, and Elisabeth Larsson, M.D., and Belle Wood Comstock, M.D., in the 1940s, taught in the College of Medical Evangelists.

Many Adventist women turned to nursing as a career. Kathryn L. Jensen, R.N., was superintendent of nurses at Washington Sanitarium and Hospital in 1920. In 1930 she was assistant for nursing in the Medical Department of the General Conference, and remained there until the 1940s. In 1945 Winifred McCormack was associate secretary for health education in the General Conference, and in 1955 Joyce Wilson held that position.

Adventist women have always been a force in editing and writing. Lora Clement was editor of the *Youth's Instructor* for 29 years, from 1923 to 1952. In 1920 seven out of 10 union periodicals were edited by women; in 1930 only four out of 10 still had women editors.

As conferences grew, they developed a new administrative level in publishing, and although some women appeared in those positions in the 1940s and 1950s, they were only assistants. This reflects the role women have always played in the sale of Adventist books.

It seems that the General Conference has been more hospitable to the leadership of women than have the local conferences. Flora Plummer headed the Sabbath School Department during the early years of the twentieth century. She edited the *Sabbath School Worker* and the *Sabbath School Quarterly*. In 1935 the Review and Herald Publishing Association published her book *The Spirit of the Teacher*, a volume dedicated to helping Sabbath school teachers become more effective. She was also author of *The Soul-Winning Sabbath School*. When she retired, her position was filled by a man.

Ethel Young entered the profession of teaching in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother. She taught elementary school for 11 years, was a supervisor for nine years, and for seven years was an associate director of education in the General Conference. Maybelle Vandermark went to the General Conference in 1952 as assistant in the Lay Activities Department to work with Community Services and the Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Services (SAWS). She authored the *Manual for Community Services* and *Student Guide to Welfare Ministry*.

The women mentioned in this chapter are only a few of the women who have served, in large numbers in the past, in smaller numbers in recent decades. Elsewhere in this book authors Ramona Greek, Patricia Habada, and Beverly Rumble provide a more current treatment of women in administrative posts. Some of these are positions of leadership and some are volunteer positions, in institutions of all kinds throughout the denominational structure.

Finally, it would be a serious omission not to mention another very significant area in which Seventh-day Adventist women have made a contribution to their church. Although between 1915 and 1970 they were removed from authoritative positions of church leadership, they continued to form the foundation, the underpinnings, of the local churches. By their untiring efforts (often unrecognized) they have continued to support the church financially and by personal effort, in both paid positions and as volunteers.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy C. Bass, "Their Prodigious Influence: Women, Religion, and Reform in Antebellum America," in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Reuther and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics and much biographical information in this chapter have been compiled from *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbooks*.

<sup>3</sup> Telephone interview with Mary Neufeld of Portland, Oregon, Oct. 24, 1986.

## CHAPTER 4

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# Women's Leadership, 1971-1992: The Expanding Years

*RAMONA PEREZ-GREEK, PH.D.*

**I**n recent history, women's accomplishments and contributions in society reflect diverse inroads. Successful endeavors have been seen in law, medicine, and management, where women have increased their participation by 300 to 400 percent. In 1965, for example, women held only 14 percent of managerial jobs, whereas in the late 1980s they held more than a third of those jobs;<sup>1</sup> and at the local, state, and national levels an unprecedented number of women have won leadership offices.

Internationally, former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and former Norwegian prime minister Gro Brundtland emerged as women leaders capable of leading their countries.

Nonetheless, there is a need for significant changes to continue to occur for women. An example is in the occupational world, where the female majority still are paid less

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<sup>1</sup>Ramona Perez-Greek is the assistant director of Women's Ministries for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Formerly she was assistant professor of mental health nursing at Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama. She has a Ph.D. in nursing from Texas Women's University, Dallas, Texas. Dr. Greek is the first Hispanic woman to chair the Women's Commission.

than their male counterparts, earning 70 cents to the males' \$1.

Demographic trends indicate that more and more women will comprise the work force. Women will take two thirds of the new jobs created in the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> They will be the key work force for the booming service and information sector. By the year 2000, 40 percent of all managers in the workplace will be women.

Like the broader society, the Christian church faces the growing challenge of recognizing women's talents and the imperative of supporting, through action-based behaviors, the utilization of these gifts for the completion of the mission of the church.

Professional Christian women who have developed their skills in the business, educational, legal, and medical worlds need to feel they can achieve the same level of contribution in their church lives. Recently an articulate young Black female physician shared this: "For some time I separated my professional work and my church. Only recently am I beginning to see that they, and my responsibilities to them, overlap in many ways. This realization is making me excited about the potential of being useful in the church I love!" A feeling of being fulfilled within the church surfaces as a result of being able to use one's gifts.

The church is the logical arena in which women can express themselves as leaders in various ministry opportunities. Women leaders enable others to contribute their best talents and energies, and recognize that effective leadership is more like "nurturing than ruling, more like guiding than demanding, and more like serving than being served." This model of leadership emancipates women to give of their talents to the church.

Through appointed committees, commissions, and study groups, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has sought to find satisfactory answers to the multiple questions about women and their gifts. Questions of importance have included: Does the traditional church provide opportunities that are challenging and significant in which women may serve? How can



women with the gifts of administration, implementation, organization, strategy, and planning be used in the church? What about the leadership gifts of stay-at-home mothers and grandmothers—how is the church using these? What about the leadership of the female pastor? Does the church, in fact, have responsibility to address the needs, gifts, and talents of women? Can women move in the direction of oneness in Christ as they grow together?

Out of the flux of discussion and attempted change have come indications of a church attempting to be responsive to women's voices. Today, at the upper levels of church organization, three groups function to address women's needs in the denomination: the North American Division Women's Commission (NADWC), Shepherdess International (SI), and the General Conference (GC) and North American Division (NAD) Women's Ministries offices and advisories.

### **NAD Women's Commission**

The NAD Women's Commission was established by the 1983 Annual Council to be the liaison between the women of the church and the North American Division leaders. Its principle mandate was to advise and inform church leaders on issues affecting women, to be a catalyst for change.

A brief history may illuminate and define the contributions of the NADWC. In 1983 Warren Banfield, director of the newly organized Office of Human Relations (OHR), gained approval and financial support for the establishment of a women's commission. Upon his retirement in 1989, Dr. Rosa Banks was appointed as his successor. Dr. Banks was the first African-American woman to direct a GC or NAD office. She brought enthusiasm and vision to the commission, increasing its visibility and effectiveness.

The commission has had shifts in leadership, each adding a distinct influence to its purpose and direction. Alice Smith was the first to chair the commission; Dr. Thesba Johnston succeeded her in 1986, and served a three-year term. In January 1990 Dr. Ramona Perez-Greek assumed the chair.

Under the leadership of Smith and Johnston, the NAD

Women's Commission established a committee to identify women's concerns and to recommend courses of action to NAD officers. The commission met three times a year, for two or three days each time. It initiated town meetings in every union in the North American Division to give a voice to Adventist women at the grass roots level.

Specific areas of women's needs have been identified as: single women, widowed women, divorced women, single parents, empty-nest syndrome, working women, marital discord, battered/abused spouses, substance abuse, mid-life crisis, financial stress, weight problems, rape/incest victims, eating disorders, balancing work and family, education, pay equity, child-care, dual careers, sex discrimination, and the superwoman syndrome.

The sensitizing of Adventist constituencies and administration to women's needs and issues has increased awareness. The identified needs have worked their way into planned programs to meet women's needs and as recommendations forwarded to the NAD officers for resolutions.

The union and conference commissioners have been dynamic, dedicated, committed, and highly motivated leaders each in her own right. In pioneering new ground they have altered church thought in regard to women. In improving communication among church leadership, and as liaisons in communicating women's concerns, they have exemplified leadership styles conducive to change. They have become a significant part of the church's global mission.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, they have left footprints of nurturance through the encouragement and coordination of women's weekend retreats, one-day seminars, prayer breakfasts, small groups, and numerous other activities. In these, hundreds of women have found peace, solace, spiritual renewal, and a restored sense of self-worth. Several women have been reclaimed to church membership, and hundreds have recommitted their lives with decisions for baptisms. The spirit of these women is admirable, and their courage and conviction require recognition.

For example, South Atlantic Conference commissioner

Deborah Harris, Ph.D., arranged a women's retreat in North Carolina in 1989 that was attended by more than 1,000 women. Again, more than 1,000 persons attended the Hands-Across-the-Waters Banquet during the General Conference session in July 1990. The banquet hosted African sisters to unite in spirit and demonstrate support from across the United States and Canada. More recently 2,000 women attended the South Atlantic Conference women's retreat at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, where spiritual renewal and training sessions were offered.

Conference commissioners have planned, organized, and implemented women's ministries in their respective territories and have established the role of women's ministries coordinator in local churches.

Town meetings, surveys, and verbal exchanges implemented during 1990 to 1991 throughout the North American Division indicate that mainstream Adventist women everywhere are seeking renewal through the spiritual disciplines of Bible study, prayer, praise, and sharing of their life experiences in Christ.

### **Shepherdess International**

A key group in representing women's concerns is Shepherdess International, organized under the General Conference Ministerial Association. Based on the results of a church growth research study, the Ministerial Association concluded that ministers' spouses greatly needed support to enhance their spiritual and emotional well-being. Building on the work of Kay Dower, the General Conference established the Shepherdess ministry, with Marie Spangler and Ellen Bresee as directors. It serves as the major ministry to ministers' spouses. The women's meetings provided at the General Conference sessions were the best-attended programs for women.

### **Women's Ministries—Offices and Advisories**

The group functioning at the General Conference level to help women in the church is the Women's Ministries advisory

committee, established by the 1985 Annual Council. The first chair was Betty Holbrook. It is an in-house group directly responsible to the president of the General Conference, and it is charged with encouraging fuller participation of women in church administration. It also helps to increase church officials' awareness of women's leadership capabilities.

To aid in achieving these goals, the committee began to accumulate data on skills of Adventist women. In 1988 an international research study of Seventh-day Adventist women in leadership was conducted by Karen Flowers and Carole Kilcher. This will facilitate the consideration of qualified women when positions become available at higher administrative levels.

In 1985 NAD officers invited Elizabeth Sterndale to attend the officers' meetings, with full voting powers, to raise the consciousness level relative to the needs and desires of women. Also, she was appointed liaison to the Women's Commission for that group. On behalf of the NAD she commissioned a study on women as local church elders. The first NAD meeting of Women in Ministry was called at the time of the 1987 Annual Council.

Shortly after the 1990 General Conference session in Indianapolis, an Office of Women's Ministries was established at both the North American Division and General Conference levels. Elizabeth Sterndale and Rose Otis, respectively, were appointed as directors of the entities. Sterndale also became an NAD officer with the title of field secretary. She carries other responsibilities that include executive director of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Nurses and associate director of the Health and Temperance Department. Ramona Perez-Greek was appointed as assistant director for the NAD Office of Women's Ministries.

Because of its focus on women's ministries activities, the NAD Women's Commission requested a name change. In March 1991 it became Women's Ministries. Currently the directors from the nine union conferences in the United States and Canada are: Atlantic Union, Junell Vance; Canadian Union, Jean Parchment; Columbia Union, Susan Sickler;

Lake Union, Cynthia Prime; Mid-America Union, Evelyn Glass; North Pacific Union, Betty Rayl; Pacific Union, to be appointed as of this writing; Southern Union, Evelyn Vandever; and Southwestern Union, Nola Horne.

An important first and a significant part of the 1992 NAD Evangelism Council was the integration of seminars and meetings for Hispanic women. One of the recommendations that came out of the meetings was "reimbursement to pastors' wives, thus enhancing a team ministry," which received support from Hispanic pastors and leaders. The meetings enhanced the Hispanic women's spirit of service, as they identified needs they could help meet and opportunities to administer the practical love of Jesus to those in need.

Rose Otis, director of Women's Ministries on the General Conference level, reports directly to the General Conference president. She is challenged to encourage more opportunities for women in the church's decision-making bodies, and to inspire both young and seasoned women to become intimately involved in the mission of the church. Otis has traveled widely, speaking at spiritual retreats, camp meetings, and to groups of church administrators, sharing experiences that validate the merits of Women's Ministry programs.

Before the General Conference Office of Women's Ministries had been in existence for a full year, four divisions in addition to the NAD had appointed leadership on the division level. They were: the Euro-Asia (former Soviet) Division, where Rose had spent two years working with Soviet women. Ludmila Krushenitskaya, the division director of Women's Ministries, pioneers programs for Soviet women. In the Far Eastern Division Dr. Nancy Bassham has motivated literally thousands of women to become involved in various ministries. In the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Thelma Nortey provides leadership to tens of thousands of evangelistic-minded women. Birthe Kendel was appointed liaison for Women's Ministries in the Trans-European Division at their 1991 year-end meeting.

Soon after the Office of Women's Ministries was established, a 30-member Women's Ministries World Advisory

was appointed, comprising women representing more than 18 different cultures and ethnic groups. This advisory meets quarterly to give input on programs, issues involving women in the church, and outreach plans.

During the first year of operation, two Global Mission projects were launched. In the West Indonesia Union, Women's Ministries chapters are raising up new congregations in areas where 87 percent of the population are Muslim. Also, a scholarship program was introduced to benefit young women worldwide.

### **Women in Leadership Roles**

The statistics reflect the expanding role of women within the church. In 1970, 17 women served in administrative posts at the General Conference, NAD, union, and conference levels. In 1991 there were 131.

Eight women have served the church as officers in recent years, one at the General Conference, two at the North American Division, and five at the local conference level. They are as follows: Rowena Rick, associate treasurer, GC, 1990-present; Dr. Rosa Taylor Banks, associate secretary, NAD, 1990-present; Elizabeth Sterndale, field secretary, NAD, 1990-present; Helen Turner, treasurer, Southwest Region, 1982-1985; Marian Bakker, treasurer, Bermuda Conference, 1987-1989; Phyllis Ware, secretary-treasurer, Central States Conference, 1990-present; and Dorothy Cole and Millie Reiter, who served the Florida Conference as associate treasurers in 1989.

The first female director since 1970 on the NAD level was Rosa Taylor Banks, who has served since 1989 as director of the Office of Human Relations. She was also the first woman general field secretary in both the General Conference and the NAD. Since 1990 she has served as the associate secretary of NAD. Elizabeth Sterndale, also an officer of the division, has served as field secretary since 1990.

Between 1970 and 1981 women served as directors of Communication (most often), Health and Temperance, Education, Public Relations, and Sabbath School. According to

available records, no woman has ever been elected as president of a conference, union, or division.

Lyn Behrens has been appointed as president of Loma Linda University. She is the first woman to serve as president of an Adventist college or university, and one of the few women university presidents anywhere.<sup>3</sup>

The ordination of women is a topic that has passed through a byzantine maze of recommendations, study commissions, ad hoc commissions, and church council meetings. In 1990 the General Conference session voted to deny ordination to women in ministry. However, the recognition of a woman's calling to the gospel ministry has led women to service in a variety of ways.

On September 1, 1973, Josephine Benton was ordained as an elder in the Brotherhood SDA Church in Washington, D.C., with the presidents of the Columbia Union Conference and Potomac Conference officiating. Special internship allotments for Bible workers and associates in pastoral care were voted. Lucy and Collette Crowell became women seminarians.

Women have served in the role of associate pastor. The Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland, was the first (1973) to call a woman as associate pastor. Josephine Benton served on its staff of six ministers.

Changes in the *North American Division Working Policy*<sup>4</sup> permitted unordained male pastors to baptize and to solemnize marriages. With the desire to affirm the women working as associates in pastoral care within the conference, the Potomac Conference in 1984 became the first conference to allow women pastors to baptize.

This recognition of women's calling to gospel ministry led to a baptismal event. On February 10, 1984, Marsha Frost, then co-pastor with her husband in the Fairfax and Arlington, Virginia, churches, baptized a young woman whom she had led to accept Christ. Under the conference executive committee action that authorized that baptism, Jan Daffern, then associate pastor of the Sligo church, and Frances Wiegand, associate pastor of the Beltsville, Maryland,

church, performed baptisms. Altogether the three women baptized 12 people in six different baptismal services.

Successful female pastors may be found throughout the North American Division. A few examples: Nancy Canwell, associate pastor of the Walla Walla College Church, attracts hundreds of listeners with her spiritual presentations of truth; Barbara McCoy, associate pastor in the Orlando, Florida, area, provides spiritual renewal for both men and women; and Joyce Lorenz, associate pastor in Fletcher, North Carolina, brings a nurturing-counseling focus to her ministry. There are also women serving as chaplains.

However, there are only two women serving as full-fledged pastors of churches in the North American Division at this writing. Hyveth Williams pastors the Boston Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Sheryl McMillan serves in southeastern California.

### **Leadership Through Other Adventist Women's Groups**

Lay interest in the role of women in the Adventist Church has been demonstrated in the formation of many groups addressing concerns in one form or another. The following list represents independent Adventist women's groups that have a stated purpose: Adventist Women's Speaker's Guild (AWSG); Association of Adventist Women (AAW); Adventist Women's Institute (AWI); Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry (TEAM); Bible Instructor's Guild (BIG); Women's Spiritual Koinonia; Christian Women's Retreat (CWR); and Women and Chaplaincy (WC). The information provided in the following pages is abstracted from the respective organization's own brochures, pamphlets, or flyers.

The NAD Office of Women's Ministries does not necessarily endorse the groups. However, as this office perceives its role to be that of listener and facilitator of the varied needs and voices of Adventist women, it feels this information could be useful to readers who wish to become acquainted with the diverse women's groups within the church.

The Adventist Women's Speaker's Guild's purpose:



"Training speakers through instruction and implementation; providing a resource of speakers for special-event coordinators, pastors, and other church leaders; interfacing the talents of musicians and speakers; enabling those with administrative skills to become adept in planning, organizing, and scheduling." Karen Nicola established the AWSG. She chaired the Speaker's Guild board, and was its president from its inception in 1985. The guild ceased operations in 1991.

The **Association of Adventist Women** was organized on June 13, 1982. Betty Howard, then dean of women and dean of students at Columbia Union College, was its first president. Nancy Marter served from 1986 to 1990; presently Peggy Harris serves as president. The stated goals of the organization are to encourage communication and support among Adventist women, to acquaint the church community with the potential and achievements of Adventist women, to assist Adventist women in discovering and fulfilling their potential as women, and to help the women of the church to increase their professional options within the church.

The organization has grown to include overseas chapters. It was influential in the establishment of the General Conference Women's Ministries advisory, chaired by Betty Holbrook, and in the invitation of Elizabeth Sterndale to participate in official meetings of the North American Division officers. From its inception the Association of Adventist Women advocated the establishment of a data bank of women's skills. *The Adventist Woman* is the association's newsletter.

**Adventist Women's Institute (AWI)** represents a broad spectrum of women in the Adventist Church. Professionally, the members include attorneys, homemakers, pastors, entrepreneurs, financial managers, college professors, doctoral students, physicians, sociologists, and librarians. Past chair of AWI was Faye Blix, an attorney from California. Presently Iris Yob, assistant professor of education at SUNY-Genesco, serves as chair.

The purpose of AWI is to "pursue actively the attainment of the full and equal participation, education, and develop-

ment of all persons within the Seventh-day Adventist Church community, particularly women of all ages, without regard to ethnic origin or economic and social status." According to *Ponderings*, AWI's newsletter, its focus is to "provide inspiration, encouragement, and hope for Adventist women; to publish stimulating and thought-provoking ideas; and to offer a forum for ideas relating to AWI's purpose for existence."

The mission of **Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry** (TEAM) is the "Scriptures' witness that in the last days, under the blessing of the latter rain, women as well as men will be empowered for service, as the gospel is taken to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" (see Joel 2:28-32; Matt. 24:14; and Rev. 14:6, 7).

TEAM publishes two belief statements: (1) "We believe that the biblical basis for ordaining women is true to Scripture"; and (2) "We believe that the Bible, taken as a whole, liberates women as well as men to equality, full participation in the life and ministry of the church, and exercise of spiritual gifts." Patricia Habada, Ph.D., has given direction and impetus to the organization as its chair since its inception in 1988.

**The Bible Instructor's Guild** (BIG) was formed about 1980 by Bible instructors in the Pacific Union who were influenced by the statement "Arouse your associates to work under some name whereby they may be organized to cooperate in harmonious action."<sup>5</sup>

At present, Sue Pearson is president of BIG. The organization's guidelines include: (1) to have no project other than the winning of souls; (2) to recruit lay Bible instructors and train them to win souls; (3) in order to retain membership, one must prepare at least one soul for baptism each year.

BIG membership is approximately 150, close to its target goal of 200. According to the *Adventist Review*, (Aug. 9, 1990, p. 23), "the number 200 became the target membership when the original 10 members took note of Ellen White's statement that 'if there were 20 women where there is one who would make the saving of souls their cherished

work, we should see many converted to the truth. Ten times 20 is 200.' ”<sup>6</sup>

L. J. Hughes, Sable Hughes, and Ella Tolliver became aware of the multiple roles women play in the home, church, and in the community. Based on this premise, a group of women formed a steering committee and organized the **Women's Spiritual Koinonia** fellowship in 1985.

A statement in *The Acts of the Apostles*<sup>7</sup> helped to give a purpose to the organization. “What the church needs in these days of peril is an army of workers who, like Paul, have educated themselves for usefulness, who have a deep experience in the things of God, and who are filled with earnestness and zeal. Sanctified, self-sacrificing women are needed: women who will not shun trial and responsibility; women who are brave and true; women in whose hearts Christ is formed ‘the hope of glory,’ and who with lips touched with holy fire will ‘preach the word.’ For want of such workers, the cause of God languishes, and fatal errors, like a deadly poison, taint the morals and blight the hopes of a large part of the human race.”

Koinonia aims to give women the opportunity to allow Jesus, through the Holy Spirit and by God's grace, to: know the gifts God has given us, change from selfish to selfless character, learn methods to serve our one and only Master, become part of the circuit of beneficence, keep from becoming irresolute Christians, and consciously know we are abiding in Christ. Koinonia helps women of various denominations and ethnic backgrounds to become active, inside participators rather than outside spectators.

The **Christian Women's Retreat (CWR)** was founded in 1982 on the concept that women in northern California deserved to have the opportunity to pray and fellowship with one another, to develop a closer personal relationship with Jesus, and to listen to dedicated Christian women speakers. The members believe that women can best be ministered to by other women. Pam Whitted has been the president of CWR since its formation. Hundreds of women of all faiths

find spiritual renewal through the organization's annual retreats.

**Women-in-Ministry** organized in 1985. Margo Patron became president at its inception. Joyce Lorenz became president in January 1991, and Sheryl McMillan currently serves in that position. The group is an emotional and spiritual support system for women in ministry.

### Conclusion

We see a new wind blowing among us. The direction that wind takes will be indicated by changes not only in leadership decisions that involve women's concerns, contributions, gifts, and talents, but also by the thinking and attitudes on the part of the general church membership as they relate to women's matters.

Christian women seek a significant role in the church and its growth, in useful and serviceable ways. Women bring a diversity in their gifts that is essential to the church reaching its mission. "For in . . . diversity of talent, yet unity in Christ, [is] the power of . . . usefulness."<sup>8</sup> Christ our model. He gives us our strength, our direction, and our destiny.

According to *Time*,<sup>9</sup> women are making significant differences in church life, community life, family life, and professional life, even though the changes are far from complete. The revolution, the *Time* editor states, "promises over time to bring about changes as profound for men and women as any that have occurred in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union in the past year." The crucial question is whether the church will be ready for these changes, or better yet, whether the church will be the forefront of creating the changes, exemplifying God's creation of humanity as "neither Jew nor Greek," "neither bond nor free," "neither male nor female," for "we are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, KJV, TLB).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Labor Force Statistics Derived From the Current Population Survey: Data Book* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, September 1982), Vol. I, Bulletin 20:96;

*Employment and Earnings* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 1986 ed.), table 2.2.

<sup>2</sup> John Naisbit, *Megatrends 2000* (New York: Avon Publishers, 1991).

<sup>1</sup> William G. Johnsson, "B. Lyn Behrens—University President," *Adventist Review*, Sept. 6, 1990, pp. 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> *Working Policy, North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1980).

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 267.

<sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 146.

<sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 507. (Gender supplied.)

<sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 101.

<sup>9</sup> "Women: The Road Ahead," *Time* (special issue, Fall 1990).

## CHAPTER 5

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# Women in SDA Educational Administration

PATRICIA A. HABADA, PH.D.,  
AND BEVERLY J. RUMBLE

The keynote address of the fifty-third world council of the General Conference, convened at Dallas, Texas, in 1980, was given by then president Neal C. Wilson, who presented 10 mandates that he said needed emphasis, not only during that session but also around the world in the immediate future. As expected, the need to finish the work was central to his message. Self-sacrifice, serious Bible study, evangelism, involvement of the laity, and the need for strong Christian homes supported by Adventist education were among the means to the end.

Right in the middle of these mandates, Wilson called for greater involvement of women: "Recently I wrote a memo to a number of individuals asking for the names of qualified women who could be considered for elected leadership posts in the General Conference. I received very few suggestions. It

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seems appropriate, therefore, for me to appeal to the local conference and union leaders to consider women along with men for positions of responsibility. I am not only urging that women be represented in the administrative structure of the church, but also that we harness the energies and talents of all women so as to better accomplish the task of finishing the work assigned by our Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Our purpose here is to examine the potential of Wilson’s remarks for Adventist women in education.

What was the situation in 1980? How involved were women in denominational educational administration? Has the situation changed in the 1990s?

For our purposes, educational administration shall be limited to elected personnel at the General Conference, division, union, and local conference levels; secondary and higher education administrators; and members of the NAD K-12 Board and the Board of Higher Education. The last two categories are included because these bodies are responsible for major decisions that ultimately affect the entire educational system. Data reported here is limited to North America, and no data is included on elementary or junior academy administrators.

### Higher Education

Though in 1980 all college and university presidents, vice presidents, and academic deans were men, there were women in positions as residence deans, department heads, and registrars, all of which might be termed middle management. Women held the educational chairs at Andrews University and Columbia Union College, and they chaired an assortment of other departments on all SDA campuses. Union and Walla Walla colleges had women registrars. At both Loma Linda University and Walla Walla College women served as deans of nursing education. Walla Walla had a female director of institutional research, and a woman held the post of assistant to the president at Oakwood College.

It should be noted here that the *only* women elected to

participate in the collegiate top level decision-making processes were those named to the Board of Higher Education or elected to serve as board members of specific institutions.

Some things have changed in the past decade. In 1990 B. Lyn Behrens became president of Loma Linda University and the first woman to serve as president of an Adventist college or university. Dr. Behrens had formerly served as dean of the School of Medicine at the university.

As in 1980, women still hold positions in middle management as residence deans, department heads, and registrars. In 1991 men held the educational chairs at Andrews University and Columbia Union College, but women headed the education departments of Union College, Pacific Union College, and Southwestern Adventist College. Several colleges have female registrars, and all Adventist institutions of higher learning in the North American Division have women department heads.

Since 1980 nine women have become college or university vice presidents: Helen Ward Thompson, vice president for academic administration at Loma Linda University; Lilya Wagner, vice president for academic advancement at Union College; Sandra Price, vice president for academic administration at Union College; Sharlene Tessler, vice president for institutional advancement at Atlantic Union College; Myrna Tetz, vice president for college advancement at Canadian Union College; Rosa Banks, vice president for administration and development at Oakwood College; Sharon Leach, advancement vice president at Southwestern Adventist College; Karen Ballard, vice president for advancement at Walla Walla College; and Sara Terian, vice president for academic affairs at Columbia Union College. All but three continue to hold these positions.

Six women currently serve as deans of schools: Merlene Ogden, dean of the affiliation and extension program at Andrews University; Adeny Schmidt, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at La Sierra University; Joyce Hopp, dean of the School of Allied Health Professions, Loma Linda University; Helen E. King, dean of the School of Nursing,



Loma Linda University; Sharlene Tessler, dean of continuing education at Atlantic Union College; and Frances Fickess, dean of the School of Nursing, Walla Walla College.

At the 1990 General Conference session 60 persons were elected to the Board of Higher Education. Eight of these were women, including three of the five lay members. In 1980, of 45 persons on that board, two were female. Thus it would appear that major decision-making power is exercised by only a few women who are involved in administration at the collegiate level.

### Secondary Education

In 1980 women did not fare well in Adventist secondary education. Of the 86 secondary school principals in the North American Division, only three were women: Edna Williamson, principal of Northeastern Academy; Pennie Lister, principal of Golden Gate Academy; and Mildred Summerton, principal of Wisconsin Academy. Two of these academies are day schools; one is a boarding academy.

Between 1980 and 1988 the number of women principals increased from three to 10. Currently, however, only eight of the 94 senior academies in North America are headed by women.

For the most part, women principals direct day schools in heavily populated areas: Carolyn Palmer at Chicago SDA Academy, Esther Adams at Miami Union Academy, Birdie Williams at Golden Gate Academy, Lisa Bissell at San Gabriel Academy, Pearl Bell at Northeastern Academy, and Del Metellus at Greater New York Academy.

Only two boarding academies have women principals. Janis Lowry leads out at Sandy Lake Adventist Academy in Nova Scotia, and Berit Von Pohle is in charge at San Pasqual Academy in California.

### Conference and Union Administration

More women are involved at conference-level administration than at any other level, though their role is usually limited to classroom supervision and curriculum develop-

ment. They rarely have responsibility for fiscal matters and usually do not participate in hiring personnel (even though they may be asked to document classroom practices if there is a need to release a teacher).

In a 1980 action the NAD K-12 Board moved to name all such supervisory personnel as associate or assistant superintendents. (In the past, if a woman was hired to work with elementary teachers, she became a "supervisor," while her male counterpart in another conference performed the same tasks but carried the title of "associate superintendent" and received more pay.) At first glance this change in nomenclature may not seem significant, but when considered in the light of financial differentiation and elected status, it can be seen as a move toward fairness and equality.

Frances Clark, who served as director of education for the Southwestern Union from 1980 to 1991, was the first female to hold this position since 1916, when Ms. M. Hare and Ms. J. I. Beardsley served the Eastern and Western Canadian conferences. The Lake Union earlier employed two women at the post, Bessie De Graw (1902-1905) and Carrie R. Moon (1910, 1911).

Currently there is only one female union director of education, Janice Saliba, who oversees the church's education endeavors in Canada. Four women serve as associate directors of education at the union conference level.

Although women supervisors or assistant superintendents occasionally served as interim superintendents of education while their conference administration searched for a permanent candidate for the post, our research indicates that only three women were elected as local conference superintendents between 1950 and 1980. Marion Brown, a retired physician, served briefly as superintendent in West Virginia in the 1970s. By 1980 two women, Shirley Goodridge and Cardell Williamson, stood in the midst of male domination of educational superintendency.

Shirley Goodridge was the first woman superintendent of education in recent years, serving first in the Gulf States Conference and later in Hawaii.

The Allegheny West Conference office of education has been led by four women since 1980: Cardell Williamson (mentioned earlier), Beverly McDonald, Barbara Lewis, and Helen Smith. (A man currently holds the post.)

Other women serving at the local conference level in 1991 as superintendents of education are Jean Prest, New York; Joycelyn Johnson, Northeastern; Violet Weiss, Potomac; Irma Hadley, Arizona; Helen Smith, Allegheny West; Peggy Fisher, Northern New England; Beverly Lamon, Minnesota; and Shirley Watson, North Dakota day schools. The 58 conferences in North America also employ 26 female associate and assistant superintendents of education.

### Division and General Conference Education Departments

Over the years, six women have been elected to assistant or associate positions in the office of education at the division or General Conference level: Sarah Peck (1920-1922), Flora Williams (1922-1936), Florence Rebok (1945-1947), Arabella Williams (1948-1954), Ethel Young (1971-1978), and Marion Hartlein (1980-present). These women have always had responsibilities dealing with elementary or parent-home education. It should be noted that no female has ever directed a division or General Conference office of education.

One could reason that the General Conference administrators are elected by a nominating committee made up of delegates representative of nearly every nation, and that women in other parts of the world do not enjoy the enlightenment of Western cultures. (Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that *men* are not as enlightened, since they clearly dominate the actions of all committees within the church's administrative structure.)

### Probable Causes

Three causes for the small number of women in educational administration (examined in an article in *Harvard Education Review*) are as follows: a woman's place model, a discrimination model, or a meritocracy model.<sup>2</sup>

### Woman's Place Model

The woman's place model assumes that women are absent from leadership positions because of the different socialization of men and women. The "proper" role of women has been assumed to be that of nurturing and of deference to men. A career with hierarchical promotion (such as in administration) requires planning and commitment, which is difficult to achieve if one's focus "should be" on the home. Women, the theory goes, usually perceive a job as providing self-fulfillment or as something to be survived in order to earn a living, rather than as a means of achieving power and recognition, as men do.<sup>3</sup>

A position that holds that "women should be in the home," even if one holds it to be ideal, is perhaps unrealistic for most families in a culture in which inflation runs rampant and 56,554,000 women make up 45.3 percent of the United States work force.<sup>4</sup>

### Discrimination in Employment

Many women are adequately qualified for administrative jobs. The discrimination model suggests that women are less likely to apply for leadership positions because they know that there is little likelihood that they will be hired. Women at every level are passed over in favor of male applicants. Since there are few women already in these positions, male superintendents usually have not worked with female administrators and are more likely to hire a man, a known quantity, over a woman, an unknown.

Within the Adventist system, the "call" appears to work against women who might be potential administrators. There seems to be an unspoken law that says that one should not aspire to a position of leadership but should wait until a committee is moved to solicit one's services. Since "calls" are issued by bodies made up almost entirely of men who tend to think in terms of the "old boy network," it is highly unlikely that large numbers of women will be placed on any list of potential administrators for some time to come.

### **The Meritocracy Model**

Another rationale for excluding women from administration is the meritocracy model, which maintains that the most competent person in administration is always chosen for promotion; therefore, men must be more competent than women because they are chosen more often. However, extensive studies have shown that the professional performance of men in educational administration is not better than that of women.<sup>5</sup>

### **Breaking In**

Women might ask just what North American Division conference presidents are looking for in educational administrators at the academy, college, or conference levels. To determine this, a survey was sent out a few years ago. Thirty-eight conference presidents responded (out of 61). The survey inquired about preferred age, sex, and race of applicants. It also requested that the presidents list major qualifications that they sought in educational administrators.

Not surprisingly, the presidents valued spiritual commitment most highly among the desired attributes of the educational administrator. Nearly tied in their rating as second-most important were human relations and professional competence. The latter category encompassed scholastic preparation and experience.

The qualities rated next in importance were (1) administrative ability and organization, (2) good business judgment, (3) loyalty and ability to perform as a "team player," and (4) commitment and dedication.

### **Educational Qualifications**

Some surprising responses were elicited from a question about educational qualifications for administration. Although, as expected, nearly all the presidents saw a degree in education and classroom experience as necessary prerequisites to employment, fewer of the presidents (although still a majority) felt that a master's degree or a degree in educational administration was a requirement for administration,

and nine presidents were not particularly interested in whether the applicant held denominational administrative certification. A number of the presidents marked "if possible" or "preferred but not required" in the above categories.

### Preferred Race/Sex of Applicants

When queried regarding the preferred sex and race of applicants, the presidents showed a clear preference for White males. Of 38 responses, only three stated specifically that they would consider choosing a female administrator, although nine presidents said that their choice would vary with the circumstances or that they would choose the applicant with the highest qualifications. Two expressed no preference at all, and one said that it was a "dumb question." An interesting comment on one survey that indicated no sex preference was "depends on where *he* would administer" (*italics supplied*).

Conclusions drawn from this survey show that, in general, conference presidents want their educational administrator to be a White male between the ages of 34 and 45, with a degree in education—a spiritually committed man with good teaching and administrative skills who is a team player and who can effectively manage the financial aspects of administration. Degrees were not seen as being as important as experience in administration.

A 1989 study by Hessen Ghazal, one of the few women to complete a Ph.D. in educational administration at Andrews University, examined the attitudes of male administrators toward hiring and promoting female administrators in the Seventh-day Adventist school system in North America. Her study found that male SDA educational administrators expressed a positive attitude toward hiring and promoting women administrators, but their practice does not agree with their attitudes. Her conclusions call for practice to come into line with what administrators perceive their attitudes to be:

"The strong, positively expressed attitudes are somewhat surprising, considering the small proportion of females among educational administrators. It is to be hoped that in

the near future these attitudes will bear fruit in practice.”<sup>6</sup>

Ghazal called for greater opportunity for women to participate in training programs for higher levels of educational administration, and for men and women to be honest with each other in recognizing and dealing with their differences in leadership styles.

From this wrap-up, one could conclude that minorities, women, and persons over 50 stand little chance of being hired as SDA local conference educational administrators. Because of the preference for White males, these persons are not likely to receive the administrative experience that would make them attractive candidates.

Few women break into the “old boy network” or are ever accepted as “one of the gang” if they do secure a position. Women who have held such positions often find themselves alone, outside the circle, with little opportunity to talk shop or exchange ideas among other administrators. Some women compensate for this by speaking out at staff meetings or, at the other extreme, by withdrawing from the discussion. Either way, the woman loses. She either appears to become overly aggressive to the point of being obnoxious, or she withdraws to the extent that men proclaim her contributions to be few and of little value.

### **Women Not Prepared**

Recent research indicates that few women seek degrees in administration and therefore cannot be certified as principals or superintendents. Most women hired for such positions are hired because of their experience, and subsequently return to school to secure a specialist certificate in administration.

Of 169 candidates seeking graduate degrees in educational administration at Loma Linda and Andrews universities in 1980, 39 were women. In 1991, of 199 candidates, 48 were women, an increase of just 1 percent.<sup>7</sup> (This may not reflect an accurate picture, however, since many educators seek graduate degrees in institutions nearer their homes.)

### Prospects for the Future

It is highly unlikely that circumstances will change much for the next two or possibly three generations. Young men now growing up in a time when women are more accepted in the business and public education spheres may be more inclined to hire women superintendents and principals if and when such men mature to assume administrative posts that place them in a position to do so.

### Some Solutions

If the present situation is to improve, women will have to become more deliberate in setting goals and securing administrative credentials so they are indeed qualified by more than just classroom experience. Management seminars and similar training sessions for women should be sponsored by Adventist colleges and universities in cooperation with local and union conferences. We propose that the cost for such sessions be born jointly by participants and sponsoring organizations. Such seminars must be carefully planned. They should include some time when male administrators may participate in discussions with the women in attendance.

Those women who presently hold administrative positions must become more conscious of their responsibility to encourage and to assist other women who could join them in the administrative ranks. Other females should be invited to speak or to conduct seminars or other activities that place them "up front."

The SDA universities in North America might assume the task of publishing a regular newsletter that would not only give news of women in administration, but also might include information about administrative opportunities and, of course, encourage women to join their peers enrolled in administrative programs of that university.

As long as college and university personnel hold the conviction that women are better suited to nurturing roles, they will continue to encourage women to enroll in areas such as guidance and counseling. A deliberate attempt should



be made by these persons to consider other potential roles for women graduate students.

The addition of women members on educational boards and search committees could also help turn the tide.

More women should be appointed to finance and planning committees, thus giving them the opportunity to develop and use their abilities in these important administrative areas.

Certainly a conscious effort, such as that made by Neal Wilson in seeking candidates for election to General Conference offices, will be required by boards and search committees if women are ever to make significant breakthroughs into denominational administrative circles.

From our research it seems clear that some progress has been made toward involving women in Adventist educational administration. Perhaps the most significant progress appears at the collegiate level, where one woman is president (B. Lyn Behrens, Loma Linda University), six are vice presidents, and six are deans heading important schools. These 13 women serve in positions that require direct involvement in establishing policy and making major decisions.

At the local conference level, only eight of 58 superintendents are women. The proportion of women at the union level is about the same: one of nine directors is female (Janice Saliba in the Canadian Union).

Ten changes in elected personnel took place at the General Conference and North American Division Departments of Education—10 opportunities to elect women—between 1980 and 1990, but Marion Hartlein remains the only woman to serve in that group. If one were to evaluate trends in terms of what happened between 1980 and 1991, one would have to conclude that change will occur slowly unless deliberate attempts are made to achieve it.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Neal C. Wilson, "To Do the Right Thing at the Right Time," *Adventist Review*, Apr. 20, 1980, p. 4. A condensation of the keynote address to the General Conference session at Dallas, Texas, Apr. 17, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Kathleen D. Lyman and Jeanne J. Speizer, "Advancing in School Administration: A Pilot Project for Women," *Harvard Educational Review* 50, No. 1 (February 1980): 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1990.

<sup>5</sup>Lyman and Speizer.

<sup>6</sup>Hessen C. Ghazal, "Attitudes of Male Administrators Toward Hiring and Promoting Female Administrators in the Seventh-day Adventist Educational System in the North American Division" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1989), pp. ii, iii, 28-31.

<sup>7</sup>Personal communications on October 30, 1980, indicated the following data: Loma Linda University: 144 candidates (110 men, 34 women); Andrews University: 25 candidates (20 men, 5 women). Communications on January 10, 1991, indicate Loma Linda University: 137 candidates (109 men, 28 women); Andrews University: 62 candidates (42 men, 20 women).

## CHAPTER 6

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# Home and Family

KAY KUZMA, ED.D.

**T**raditionally, the role choice for men has been very clear. As “head” of the family, a man was to provide financial support. From the time he was a little boy he was told he had to be *somebody*, meaning doctor, lawyer, merchant, or fire chief. He didn’t have the luxury of staying home. He had to earn a living. He could also be a husband and father, but home and family must dovetail with employment.

The choice for women has not been so simple. A woman might be single, married, have growing children, or be mothering her older or disabled parents. She might be a volunteer worker and/or be gainfully employed.

Because men’s primary role was that of providing financial support, women were needed in the home, regardless of interests or skills. If children never left home and marriage was forever, women would have a lifetime role cut out for them. But *fortunately*, children do leave home, and *unfortunately*, marriage doesn’t always last a lifetime. Divorce or death may force a woman prematurely back into the role of

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a single woman with the necessity of being gainfully employed while at the same time shouldering full responsibility for the maintenance of the home and child rearing.

What is the ideal role model for a woman in regard to home and family? In my mother's generation, it was grandmother. The phrase "Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go" brings a feeling of nostalgia. Certainly Grandma's life was ideal. There she was, out on a farm with her children growing up like little lambs, and her mom and dad on the farm just beyond the river. Ideal?

Grandmother, on a winter's day,  
Milked the cows, and fed them hay,  
Slopped the hogs, and saddled the mule,  
And got the children off to school.  
Did a washing, mopped the floors,  
Washed the windows, and did some chores.  
Cooked a dish of home-dried fruit,  
Pressed her husband's Sabbath suit,  
Swept the parlor, made the bed,  
Baked a dozen loaves of bread,  
Split some firewood, and lugged in  
Enough to fill the kitchen bin.  
Cleaned the lamps, and put in oil,  
Stewed some apples she thought might spoil.  
Churned the butter, baked a cake,  
Then exclaimed, "For goodness sake,  
The calves have got out of the pen."  
Went out and chased them in again.  
Gathered the eggs, and locked the stable,  
Back to the house and set the table,  
Cooked a supper that was delicious,  
And after washed up all the dishes.  
Fed the cat and sprinkled the clothes,  
Mended a basketful of hose,  
Then she opened the organ and began to play  
"When You Come to the End of a Perfect Day."

— *Author Unknown*

Women my age look back on the 1950s and think *If only!* However, as my friend and colleague Len McMillian has stated so poignantly, "Ozzie and Harriet Nelson have left town." The "ideal" family that they represented (Dad going off to work, Mom staying home taking care of "her" suburban home and shouldering primary responsibility for two active nonrebellious children) is no longer the norm. And many question how ideal it really was.

Should Mom have the major responsibility of child rearing while Dad leaves the home for long periods of time in order to bring home the paycheck? My college-age son certainly wouldn't agree. "I want to marry someone who wants to work so I can stay home, fix the meals, and take care of the kids." Should this option be denied him? No more than the option of working outside the home should be denied to a woman.

What is the "ideal" home and family role for a woman in the Adventist Church today? As a family educator, I see us moving away from the guilt-producing stereotype that relegates women to the joys and disappointments of shouldering major responsibility for the home and children while it pushes Dad out the door and into the workplace. Baby-booming couples are not only choosing whether or not to have children; they are also choosing to accept whatever responsibilities are necessary in order to meet their families' needs. They are not blindly accepting the role models that were handed down to them by past generations. I think that's healthy.

Meet Kurt and Shelly, a typical couple at the close of the current century. Shelly stayed home with the kids during the first few years while Kurt chose to do much of his work at home in order to be as involved with the family as possible. Computers, modems, and fax machines make it possible for thousands of men (and women) to once again earn a living from home. Kurt has "advanced" now to an 8:00-to-5:00 office job, the children attend school, and Shelly has decided to put her five years of training as a public health nurse into a full-time job helping to pay the mortgage on their new

home and the church school tuition for their children. She leaves for work early, setting out the kids' clothing and making sack lunches. The children wake up to warm home-made bread that Mom mixed in the bread machine the night before. Dad supervises the morning activities and has even learned to style Mandy's hair "just like Mommy does." Dad drops the kids off at school on his way to work. Mom sometimes stops by his office on her midday break, and they eat lunch together. Mom picks up the kids after school and supervises their piano practice and homework while preparing the evening meal. After family worship and bathtime, Dad tucks the kids in for the night. "It's 50-50," says Kurt. "That's what it takes to make the little ones, and that's what it's taking to raise them."

What makes it possible for Shelly, as a Christian mother, to be everything she desires to be and still be an effective mom and helpmate to her husband? It's a husband who sees her potential and recognizes that God has a mission for her as well as for him. Plus, as "head" of the family, he feels it's his responsibility to maximize her potential.

Does Shelly take advantage of Kurt's goodwill? No, she puts her energies into meeting his needs for a quiet corner and uninterrupted time so that he can finish writing the dissertation he's been working on for the past two years.

They will both admit that family life is not exactly as they planned it would be in those early days of their first pregnancy. They forgot about chicken pox, the tendency kids have to write on the wall, and the nightly load of dirty laundry. But good communication skills that they learned at a marriage seminar, a good support system of friends who take the kids off their hands occasionally, and the willingness to be flexible and "roll with the punches" has paid off. "We never quarrel about who's the head of the family. From money to sex, we've got an egalitarian marriage, and we like it that way," says Shelly.

Of course, not all couples would be happy trying to emulate Kurt and Shelly's lifestyle. The secret of happiness in a Christian home today is not following what someone else is

doing, or trying to create a biblical "ideal." (If we did, and took Proverbs 31 as a model, women would be carrying on major business dealings while supervising a household full of servants, and all our children would be rising up and calling us "blessed.") The secret of fulfillment is in creating your own unique roles based on the two personalities of the couple and the needs of your children.

Kurt and Shelly are fortunate to have each other. Many Adventist women don't have a supportive partner. In fact, a vast number don't have any partner. Being single, having children, operating a home, and earning a living *by yourself* is far from ideal, but it is a role that must be accepted by many. And even in this role, satisfaction can be found.

But no one can be a good parent alone. Even though single, those mothers who are the happiest in carrying out their many roles are those with a good support network. For example, Dad, although not in the home, might have the kids every other week. Grandma and Grandpa may live just a bicycle ride away. Perhaps a stay-at-home mom is willing to provide after-school supervision, or the single mother finds a couple friends in the same situation and they share baby-sitting, chauffeuring, and meal preparation.

What do you do with the word "submission" in our turn-of-the-century world? Is there such a thing? I love the thought that Ellen White expresses about God's ideal husband/wife relationship: "Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation."<sup>1</sup>

In a perfect world there would be no need for submission, but homes today are far from perfect. Even in egalitarian marriages couples don't always agree. The closer the family is to God's ideal (as stated in Ephesians 5:21) of submitting to each other, the less often a family will need to use the

submissive-woman escape hatch (found in verse 22). When compromise seems impossible, the Lord does give couples a way to get past the conflict and move on to reconciliation.

And yes, He does say it's the wife's responsibility to submit. Perhaps it's the testosterone in a male system that moves him toward more aggressive behavior and hardheadedness. Since a woman is endowed with less of that macho hormone, could it be that it's more natural for her to be asked to give in? Or maybe womanly submission is a "curse" because of Eve's sin. I really don't know. I just know that unless someone submits to the other and is willing to start the reconciliation process, a husband and wife will never experience the joy and promise that God designed for them to find within their family. Why not submit when it brings greater love and fulfillment in its wake?

By suggesting there is a benefit to womanly submission, I'm not advocating that women should choose to "submit" in an abusive home situation. Physical and sexual abuse are not the only reason for separating from a perpetrator. Control, or misuse of authority, is equally abusive. Ellen White writes, "The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened."<sup>2</sup>

The use of force is inappropriate within a family. When a person's self-value is shredded by control tactics such as anger, money, and sex, I believe a woman (or man) has a moral right to stop this abuse. If the abuser and the abused are not willing to seek the help necessary to change this destructive interaction, then separation may be the only answer. Sometimes the threat of the loss of a relationship is the crisis that will drive a person to his or her senses and to the counseling he or she so desperately needs.

Codependency, dysfunctional family systems, and abuse are buzzwords today. The reality is that few families can escape all dysfunctionality. Research studies have put numerical significance behind the curse "unto the third and fourth generation." The responsibility of Christian women today is



to take a leadership role in recognizing dysfunctionality and choose to break the cycle of progression that leads on to the next generation. How blessed we are to be living in an age in which God has so many trained counselors who can help with this healing process.

What is the status of the Adventist home today? For a statistical glimpse, let's turn to a comprehensive study on a 1990 random sample of individuals across the United States and Canada.<sup>3</sup> What would you like to know? Let's start with the happiness factor. What are the important things that make people happy? Physical health, being loved, and a personal spiritual life top the scale. Body appearance, appreciation, and affirmation and communicating feeling with the family come next. Only a few percentage points lower appears a cluster of items that include spending leisure time with the family, sharing family responsibility, the family as the first priority, the financial situation, and friends and social life.

What are the greatest pressures on Adventist families? Leading the list are the financial pressures parents feel today and the reality of not enough time to be with their families. Next comes problems between parents and children, coherence to church standards, and job requirements. Oddly enough, the situation of both parents working, which we might think should top the list, ranks seventh; marital problems is eighth among the 12 greatest pressures on families.

The majority of respondents feel that economic need is the biggest reason the mother works. Achieving personal fulfillment comes in second—but 20 percentage points down the scale.

Adventist homes are not immune to problems. I was surprised that 11 percent of this sample group grew up with an alcoholic father.

What about discipline? Seventy-seven percent of the U.S. and 74 percent of the Canadian respondents experienced spanking as the primary method of discipline. Way down the list came withholding privileges (42, U.S.; 30, Cdn.), natural

consequences (20, U.S.; 39, Cdn.), yelling (what kind of discipline is that?) (31, U.S.; 30, Cdn.), and rewards for good behavior (22, U.S.; 23, Cdn.). Very few experienced the withholding of love and time out.

Are family members happy? Most admit to being only moderately happy (45, U.S.; 55 Cdn.), with only a third of the respondents choosing the very happy category. Although the percentages are small, approximately one out of every 10 admit to being very or moderately unhappy (12, U.S.; 7, Cdn.). The numbers may seem insignificant, but if *you* fall into that "very unhappy" category, it is not so insignificant.

What can we do to increase the satisfaction of young women establishing new family units? I'd like to think that proper education will help prepare them for the diversity of roles they are likely to experience. I'd start by encouraging them to choose a career that will allow them maximum flexibility during the various stages of a family's life cycle. Women, as well as men, should be encouraged to pace their careers to their family's needs, rather than trying to fit the family into an aggressive climb to the top of the professional ladder.

Second, I'd fly the banner of egalitarianism. (Am I being too radical?) I'd encourage both men and women simply to meet each other's and the children's needs rather than subscribe to some impractical ideal. In other words, there is no right role for a woman, only the role that is best for a particular person and her family.

Third, I'd teach young women the necessity of building a support network of family and friends so she doesn't have to carry the entire 24-hour-a-day responsibility of her children and home duties. Women should know that a support system is an essential ingredient for family satisfaction for married couples as well as for those parenting alone.

Fourth, if I could figure out how to enforce this requirement, I'd make every woman (and man) take a good course in child development and family systems. And I'd encourage older women to discipline younger ones and show them how to make their families their number one priority.

Fifth, I'd stress the concept "Every assumption can be proved wrong." I'd introduce young women to option living. Too many are drowning emotionally while trying to cope. Coping is not living; it's merely existing. Women need to be taught to design their lives to not be satisfied with the status quo, and to believe that there are solutions to their problems. Otherwise, why did the Lord say so often that "nothing is impossible with God" (see Matt. 17:20; 19:26; Mark 9:23; 10:27; 14:36; Luke 1:37; and 18:27)?

As a part of the marriage vow, I'd have couples sign a pledge that if one of the partners wanted counseling, both would go. How many homes could be saved if couples were only willing to get the help they needed before they inflicted irreparable emotional damage on each other?

And finally, I'd talk to women about what they need for personal satisfaction. I'd tell them about the importance of balancing their personal, spiritual, and social needs with the reality of needing to work and nurture a family. But all that isn't enough. Women must also have a mission. Unless a woman has a cause she'd die for, she has little reason to live.

What is an appropriate mission for a woman? For many the family will fulfill that need, and we should stand up and salute these full-time homemakers for a job well done. For others family is more like work, and they need a cause outside the home that stirs their passions. I believe God called Ellen White to a mission. And just as He chose a woman in the 1840s, He is choosing women today—and not merely childless, single women, either. If God blesses a woman with a husband and children, it doesn't mean that she is exempt from having a purpose beyond her most important purpose—that of her family. Only when we recognize that God is no respecter of persons and accept the fact that a woman can experience the same call to ministry as a man experiences (I'm not talking about ordination) will women become all God designed them to be.

And what's exciting to me is that I see light around the corner. With supportive men by our sides we can be help-mates to them in spreading the gospel message to the world,

whether it is on the assembly line, among the construction crew, within the walls of an executive suite, or in the privacy of our own homes.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville-Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Jan W. Kuzma, *1990 SDA Sample Survey: A Report of Characteristics of SDA Church Members and Their Households*. Available from Sentinel Research Services, 990 Red Hill Valley Road, Cleveland, TN 37323.

## CHAPTER 7

# Family Systems in the SDA Church

*MADLYNN JONES-HALDEMAN, TH.D.*

**T**he Elijah message was first articulated around 440 B.C. by a prophet called Malachi. Many Jews, having returned from Babylonian exile 100 years earlier, had begun the enormous task of rebuilding their city and Temple. The people endured many difficulties and discouragements, but at last the Temple and its worship had been restored.

Although the Jewish nation was not free from Persian control, they experienced little interference that was counter-productive to their sense of personal freedom. Malachi passed no judgment on the Persians, but he did describe in some detail serious social ills that would warrant therapeutic counseling on a national scale. This situation was not brought about by the Persians, who were still their overlords, but by the people themselves. Malachi accused the men, who were divorcing their wives to marry the nubile beauties of Canaan, of having dealt treacherously with their wives and with God (Mal. 2:11-14). He castigated the priests not only for corrupting the covenant of Levi (i.e., Mal. 1:7-14), but

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also for instructing the people with false or incorrect information (Mal. 2:5-9). The prophet brought to task those who could alleviate the helpless state of society's victims, the widows and orphans, but who refused to do so (Mal. 3:5). And those who were in a position to hire workers were accused of defrauding them of their rightful remuneration (verse 5). Malachi charged the whole nation with robbing God of tithes and offerings and of having turned aside from the statutes (verses 7-9).

The last social sin, embedded within the promise of Elijah and his special work, concerned the power structure in the family: "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse" (Mal. 4:5, 6, NASB).

Since the word "restore" is used regarding the relationships in the home, particularly that between the fathers and children, it seems obvious that an imbalance of power prevailed in Jewish homes and contributed to this list of social ills, all of which have to do with oppressing those who can't help themselves.<sup>1</sup> The crime of the fathers was so enormous that its results were felt in every aspect of the nation: political, religious, familial, and societal. Only a special messenger could effectively deal with it. This messenger was to prepare the Jewish community for the coming of the great day of the Lord. And so important was the message that a curse was pronounced against the earth if it was rejected. These final words of Malachi, directed to the fathers and children, hold the key to the solution of oppression that had engulfed the nation.<sup>2</sup>

The book of Malachi was thus addressed to people who could divorce their wives,<sup>3</sup> who could withhold wages, who could give tithes and offerings, who were in charge of the moral development of their sons, who chose the visitors, and who provided the animal sacrifices for the home. Note that Malachi records no accusations against the Jewish women. In the fourth century none of these activities could properly

apply to women except, perhaps, some of those in the upper class. In a patriarchal society, men of every class formed the ruling class; the women, children, and slaves formed the ruled class.

The rulers of all classes acted in such oppressive ways that God sent Malachi to warn them, in the hope of changing the downward spiral to national destruction, an event that took place A.D. 66-70.<sup>4</sup> The women became victims of this oppressive society. Although divorce broke their covenant relationship with God, a more devastating and personal catastrophe was that the women (Malachi specifically mentions the older women) were placed in a position in which they had no opportunity to care adequately for themselves.

There is a suggestion in the word "divorce" that wives might simply have been cast aside rather than divorced, suggesting a polygamous union for the husband and a rejection from the home for the wife.<sup>5</sup> To be sent away without a bill of divorcement placed the woman in the position of a harlot. No one could marry her and no one would take care of her. And her age militated against her making a living through prostitution.

The children were also victimized by the tyrannizing attitude of the father, whose word was law and whose punishment could be death.

The Elijah message, first recorded in Malachi, reappears about 500 years later in Luke's Gospel. That the Christian community applied the Elijah message to the work of John the Baptist could suggest that Malachi had not been successful in his time.

What is fascinating about this message in Luke's Gospel is that Luke omits the curse. Perhaps for him the destruction of Jerusalem indicated the curse had been carried out, which would suggest that John the Baptist, also, had not been successful. There was hope, however, for the new Christian community: they could learn from their Jewish forefathers' mistakes and take seriously the Elijah message.

For Christians the great and terrible day of the Lord speaks of the Second Advent rather than of some political

and/or national catastrophe. Those who respond to the Elijah message will be likened, therefore, to the five wise virgins, and those who do not respond, to the five foolish virgins.

An understanding of the social context in the first century will give clarity to the Elijah message in Luke's Gospel. Although 500 years had elapsed since Malachi's voice was heard in the land, the social conditions were similar. However, instead of Persians as the somewhat peaceful and gentle overlords who appeared to have a concern for the Jews' establishing their cultus once more, the militant Romans were the overlords whose presence in Judea and especially in Jerusalem was unacceptable to the Jewish hierarchy. From what can be gleaned from the Gospels, oppression appeared to take a form similar to that in Malachi's day. The lower classes of society were still victimized by the upper class (see Matt. 23). Jesus understood the seriousness of oppression and demonstrated by His own example that one must free oneself from both familial and ecclesiastical tyranny.

In the first century A.D. the Roman father was called the family despot and had complete control over every member of his household, tyrannizing his wife and children by commanding obedience to his every precept.<sup>6</sup> In the land of Judah and in the surrounding Arab countries, the right of the father was unchallenged; vengeance became the mighty arm that motivated the subjugated to compliance. Family members could not exercise the right to choose friends or mates, they had no voice in daily government, and they could make no decisions regarding their future.<sup>7</sup>

The Jewish father ruled his household—indeed, his very life—according to three social factors: honor and prestige, money, and family solidarity.<sup>8</sup> The members of his family were used to fulfill these social needs of the father rather than the whole family supporting each member in healthy individual development. The more punctilious his family was in obeying the father's precepts concerning class lines and the necessary decorum demanded for his status, the more honor and prestige the father accrued. Money and career choices determined the father's status in society, and the relationships



his children experienced were selected by the father from people who belonged to his status in society. Family solidarity was expected of every member of the household and was accomplished by strict obedience to the father's every command. He had the power of life and death over every member of his family.

Jesus' attitude toward this paternal tyranny is forcibly reflected in Matthew 12:46-50: "While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and His brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.' But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother' " (NASB).

Jesus went against what was expected in His day as the correct response to those in authoritative positions by refusing to acknowledge the presence of His mother and brothers. The Roman fathers had the power to sell their sons into slavery if they did not approve of either the behavior or the speech of the son. In this passage the mention of the mother and the brothers clearly suggests authority, power, and control. They did not approve of the way Jesus was acting and speaking for a Messiah. They wished to counsel Him so that His speaking could bring honor and prestige to them and the family name. Refusing to permit them to control His individuality or to alter His teaching content, He ignored them and claimed that those who do God's will are His family. In Matthew 12 God's will is understood as being free from both ecclesiastical and familial domination and control.

For the Romans it was believed that the success of the empire depended on each home following the particular rules set out by the government. These house rules demanded that the father as the superior one must control the inferiors—his wife, children, and slaves. Not to comply with this house code placed the father in the position of being against Rome.

One could not afford to be seditious in the first century and hope to escape the iron grasp of Rome.<sup>9</sup>

Going against such a powerful figure as the family despot does not appear to many as a "turning of the hearts," or "restoring" the hearts. Yet in order to turn the hearts of their fathers, as Malachi proposed, children must learn to reject the tyrannical control of the fathers. To refuse to be controlled by someone else means to take control of one's own life and belief system.

Many people today believe in and practice "peace at any price" as the solution to tyrannical control. But the price appears to be extremely high if the physical, emotional, and mental problems afflicting our church and society are any indication. "Peace at any price" was practiced for many centuries, but two great prophets, Malachi and John the Baptist, declared that this status quo in families was not God's will; deliberate resistance to changing such an oppressive situation would eventually result in the demise of the nation. To turn the hearts of the fathers must certainly suggest that children begin to act responsibly. They must learn to make their own choices.

To follow in the steps of Jesus would mean that one should practice solidarity or oneness with the whole human race, not just with a certain gender, class, or race of people. Such responsible behavior or choice was not directed against the father but certainly against the traditions that gave the father tyrannical power and control. It was directed against teachings of exclusivism, spawned by those who would erect walls against evil but who practiced evil in their homes.

Jesus' radical teachings indicate that honor and prestige acquired by tyrannizing a family must not be countenanced by any son or daughter. He used strong words in Matthew 10:34-37: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy

of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (NASB).

The basic teaching of Jesus deals with oneness or solidarity with all people, not just the family or the church. Thus the words "to hate" in this context must surely refer to not having solidarity with just one's family at the expense of oneness with all.

This strong language reminds us that Jesus understood the seriousness of oppression and that one must take difficult steps to help rid oneself of it. To break away from the family tradition and mores that guarantee honor and status to the father was not an easy task. In verse 38 the reference to one's cross is surely metaphorical for death. To defy a father in the first century could well result in losing one's life. The solution to oppression is fraught with tremendous risks.

But rather than fighting oppression with oppression, Jesus asked the oppressed to make decisions for themselves, to think for themselves, to act for themselves, and to still stay connected to their families in compassionate and capacitating ways. The words "take up your cross" were clearly a warning for what the future held for someone who would begin the work of becoming a self in her or his own right. But as we shall see, following this dictum of Jesus does bring change into an oppressive family, church, or society.

### **Differentiating the Self**

In the language of family systems theory, taking responsible action for the self against that which deprives one of liberty is called "differentiating the self." "To move away from silent submission or ineffective fighting toward a calm but firm assertion of who we are, where we stand, what we want, and what is and is not acceptable to us" reflects a twentieth-century definition of self.<sup>10</sup> It also does not suggest running away or acting aloof, but "listening to others without reacting, communicating without antagonizing others."<sup>11</sup> Our communication to others would include a "maximum of 'I' statements that define our position, rather than blaming 'you' statements that hold the others responsible for

their condition or destiny.”<sup>12</sup>

But how does acting for the self help to restore or turn the hearts of the fathers and the sons? If we are seeking better relationships in the family, self-direction appears to promote antagonism rather than togetherness. Yet it can be said that peace at any price only keeps the family or system stuck, and the same oppressive behaviors are passed on, generation after generation. If one engages in oppressive behavior to overcome the oppression, oppression remains; only the oppressor's name is changed.

But in systems thinking, that which appears to be closest to the teaching of Jesus and to Elijah's meaning, a change in one part of the system promotes change in the entire system. In other words, families in which togetherness is controlled by one person (whether through tyrannical behavior or illness, mental or physical) do not provide the opportunity for individuality of any of its members. If one member in the family can learn the fine art of differentiating the self, change for the good can be brought into the whole system. In this sense, that person is the “salt” of his or her earth or the “light” of his or her world.

In the family system “the development of the physical, emotional, and social dysfunctions bears a significant relationship to adjustments people make in response to an imbalance of individuality and togetherness.”<sup>13</sup>

For example, someone may produce physical symptoms by adjusting to peace at any price. Differentiation of the self must then have something to do with freedom—freedom from control and, therefore, freedom from symptoms of all kinds. Christ's own words, as stated in Luke 4:18, 19, indicate that He considered liberation from oppressive beliefs and conditions the object of His labors:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.  
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set free those who are downtrodden,  
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (NASB).

That Jesus is pictured healing the multitudes indicates that His teachings bring health and functionality to all who will believe and follow His example.

For the twentieth-century family, tyranny is observed not only in physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, but also in "poisonous pedagogy," a false belief system that cripples and sometimes kills the psyche of children.<sup>14</sup> Since this violent belief system travels through the generations, grown children, although unwilling victims of tyranny and violence, will nevertheless pass it on to the next generation in some form.<sup>15</sup> It does appear that the victims grow up to marry those who will continue the abuse started in their families of origin.

Of course, there are many patterns of behavior that are passed down from mother to daughter and from father to son.<sup>16</sup> Some of these patterns, although not necessarily described as tyrannical, nevertheless deprive the children of their full selfhood.<sup>17</sup> Overfunctioning mothers, who were taught that they must do all the tasks in the household rather than teach each child how to be responsible for the self, prepare themselves for developing symptoms in the mental, physical, social, sexual, or emotional areas. Whenever one overfunctions, there is someone in the family who underfunctions. This perpetration of abuse by one member of a family on other members in the family produces dysfunctionality in that system.<sup>18</sup>

The Elijah message for today concerns adult children and parents, both of whom have struggled with the issues of togetherness and individuality and have lost. The starting point for practicing restoration or at-onement is the family, because it is the locus of our pain, our abuse, our erroneous belief system. It is the place in which as children we are robbed of our selfhood. It is the school in which we were shamed and showered with guilt in the name of God. It is the system that inculcated the "togetherness" at the expense of the "individual."

Our family of origin is where we began our lives, and it must now become the arena for reclaiming our individuality.<sup>19</sup> We are to reclaim our "self" from those who

purloined it. As children in our family of origin, we are "carriers of whatever has been left unresolved from the generations that went before."<sup>20</sup>

For those who wish not only to stop the dreaded generational baggage from being passed on but also to free the self from oppressive symptoms, the Elijah message holds out that hope. We can be freed from the role of both the victim and the victimizer.

Contrary to everything we have been taught regarding our role in the family, Christian women (and men, of course) are called upon in this message to declare and clarify a self rather than remain passive and in the shadows for the sake of "togetherness." We can begin with such simple statements (whether asked or not) as "This is what I think (or believe)" or "This is what I will do (or will not do)." Such statements come from the self and do not try to force others to believe or behave. The "I" begins "to act responsibly for one's own happiness and comfort, and it avoids thinking that tends to blame and hold others responsible for one's own unhappiness or failures."<sup>21</sup>

### **Homeostasis or Balance**

Such small beginnings are always met with powerful "change back" forces, because the system loathes change. Family members who were the happy recipients of a mother's overfunctioning will call the mother selfish, unmotherly, lazy, and a host of other derogatory names, because they must now do their own chores and tasks. No one in the family will thank the mother for this brave step. The underfunctioning will have to become responsible for themselves, and they groan and complain. Thus the system will have to change, even though it groans and complains.

Many a differentiating step falls on this "change back battleground." The system is doing its best to maintain its balance. If the mother can refuse to take adverse comments seriously, she will be responsible for empowering the system to change for the better. In a sense, this "change back to what

you were before you took this step” suggests that the step was successful.

A family system has built into it the ability to stabilize itself when confronted with some imbalance. It will adjust because it must be balanced. It may take several days, perhaps two or three weeks, but as one maintains the differentiating step, the system stops resisting the change.

Taking responsibility for only the self in capacitating ways, and allowing others the same right, has a profound effect in a family system. Those who appear strong can learn to share their vulnerabilities and weaknesses with others and solicit insight and suggestions from other members, rather than give advice all the time. Learning to define the self takes time and can never be accomplished in big steps, nor for the sake of another. The system recognizes only when the step is indeed differentiating and not for the purpose of trying to change someone else.

### The Identified Patient

Usually one or more members in a family manifest differing symptoms that signal the surfacing of family stress or pathology.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes this family stress shows up in a child in the form of a failure at school, bedwetting, juvenile diabetes, drugs, overweight, or hyperactivity.<sup>23</sup> In an adult it could take the form of “excessive drinking, depression, chronic ailments, a heart condition, or perhaps even cancer.”<sup>24</sup>

When we can recognize that the whole system is in stress rather than just one member, we will not try to “fix” this child or that adult so that the whole family can get well. Since “family systems thinking locates a family’s problem in the nature of the system rather than in the nature of its parts,”<sup>25</sup> it will be necessary to start observing how we function in our system and begin to make our personal changes and not try to make someone else change.<sup>26</sup>

The problem child is crying out for help, and we mistakenly believe that he is the needy member, when in reality the whole family is in trouble. When mother and father are trying

to "fix" the neighborhood terror or the school vandal or the medical problem, they have put on hold their own private conflicts and appear to be united for this sudden emergency. Their efforts could be used more appropriately in attending to their own problems in their original families of origin.

### **The Extended Family**

Family systems assumes that in order to take differentiating steps to clarify and define a self, one can improve the percentage for success by putting together a genogram of several generations. "Working on a genogram helps us to pay primary attention to the self in our most important and influential context—our first family."<sup>27</sup> A genogram gives us a broader perspective. We get acquainted with more of the family and hear different perspectives so that our information about the family is not lopsided. We can learn how generations handled anxiety: some cut off from the family; others yelled and screamed; still others became ill; and perhaps some chose mental illness. We can begin to see the legacy that was passed on to us, and we can decide how much we wish to pass on to others.

As we learn to get in communication with more members of our extended family, including second and third cousins, we will discover the emotional processes at work. This information "can aid significantly in the resolution of emotional problems in our immediate family."<sup>28</sup>

### **Emotional Triangles**

The balancing of the togetherness and individual equation in times of stress often propels one party of a twosome to bring someone else into the picture. Family systems calls this triangling. Often the children get triangled by the parents, or a friend or relative becomes the third party. Sometimes an organization, such as the church or work, fills the third position.

When anxiety or stress is low in a two-person relationship, the relationship can be calm and comfortable. However, when anxiety increases, a third party is brought in, and the



anxiety is now spread among three people. Within the family, triangles can and usually do last forever, generation after generation.

In the process of differentiating the self, one must learn how to detriangle the self. To take sides will only make the third party the recipient of the anxiety. It is important to communicate a neutral position to the other two parties and to recognize that no one can fix the relationship of the other two.<sup>29</sup>

The acquisition of knowledge concerning family systems is a slow process because it is a different way to think from the way we have been thinking all our lives. To resist tunnel vision (cause and effect) and see the bigger picture; to realize that everyone contributes to the imbalance in the family, not just the sick one whom everyone wishes to fix; to discover "my part" in the dysfunction and to do something about it empowers the individual to begin the work of restoration.

The one who has the greatest capacity to bring change into a system is often the victim of oppression, not the victimizer. The Elijah message, however, addresses both the victim and the victimizer. When the Elijah message was delivered in both Malachi's and Luke's time, fathers were responsible for the character development of their sons. However, in the twentieth century, that situation no longer obtains. Mothers in particular, and many times both parents, are responsible for their children's education and moral development. Thus we can address the women as the recipients of this message today.

And generally speaking, women show a willingness to want to learn new ways if the old ways are not working. It does appear that the Elijah message was not successful either in Jesus' day or in the succeeding centuries. Many authorities believe the percentage of dysfunctional families in America today far outnumbers that of functional families.<sup>30</sup>

The Elijah message is applicable to every person, whether one is married or single, simply because everyone is a child. Everyone has parents, but not everyone is married. Thus those who are parents are addressed and those who are

children are addressed. No one is left out in this message. And since many people are both children and parents, the restoration goes both directions, forward to the children and backward to one's parents. Perhaps the point of the message is that one person can begin this work.

It may seem strangely contradictory to present a message of restoration today to women whose very position in the family has traditionally been one of helplessness and dependence. (There are indications that "60 million are sex abuse victims" and "one out of eight is a battered woman."<sup>31</sup>) But to remain a victim either mentally or emotionally assures the next generation of its incapacitating legacy. How, then, can one person in a family, perhaps a victim himself or herself of abuse, make any change in the dysfunctional and sick status of the family? What can I, a woman, possibly do that could be called "restoration" or "turning the hearts"?

In the patriarchal society<sup>32</sup> in which the man was the unchallenged leader in both the home and government, the condition of the home and hence that of society remained unchanged, oppressive, and unredemptive, with the sins of the fathers being passed to the third and fourth generations. When Christian women realize that their differentiating steps can effect enormous change in both their nuclear family and their family of origin, their prayers will be first for themselves. They will address the function they have been given in both of their family arenas, and they will consider how they can change things so that the redemption of entire families can take place.<sup>33</sup>

Without insight and information, no change can be effected. When we can believe that capacitating ourselves to function as God designed us to function in all areas of life is the only solution to the magnitude of generational abuse, then and only then will we as women be empowered to take up the work of the Elijah message.

Both tyranny and passivity must be rejected as patterns to emulate and to pass on to the next generation. Women must learn that just praying for their children cannot take the place of a mother's defining and clarifying her position and limits

in the home. To shirk the duty of reclaiming a self is to burden your children with more than their own load.

The Elijah message is a personal message. It asks us (1) to care for the self, (2) to resist degrading labels of all kinds, (3) to refuse to be a recipient of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, (4) to stop being an enabler in others' incapacitating addictions or problems, and (5) to see the debilitating and shaming patterns that keep being repeated generation after generation. Why should innocent children suffer because their parents never took time to learn that there is a way to put a stop to it all?

The mother and/or child shares in the task of restoring hearts. Such work has nothing to do with changing others or solving the problems of others. It means to claim the image of God in oneself. It means to end the dreadful cycle of the sins of the fathers being passed to the third and fourth generation. Can we resist taking these steps because we are afraid, or because someone has told us it is not our rightful position, or because we believe no one will like us, or because we will be accused of being selfish?

To bring reconciliation or at-onement into our lives, it will become necessary for us to get "connected" to our family of origin on our terms and reject those abusive and derogatory terms that were our legacy. As we negotiate within our first family, learning to communicate about important issues and conflicts, setting boundaries regarding our treatment at their hands, confronting those who have been abusive, appreciating the steps other family members take toward reconciliation, understanding the anxiety that drives us to do and say what we really don't desire, we will bring change into not only that family but whatever new family we have created. And we can learn to be patient both with ourselves and other members of the family. Change does not occur overnight.

Any act that is done for the self should capacitate the self in a responsible way. Any act done for another should capacitate the other. Anything less than this is oppression. The Elijah message is a reciprocal message. It means mutual

respect, mutual responsibility, and mutual relating. As a parent, whatever I want for myself I must grant to my children. Tyranny results when only one receives respect.

The old ways have not worked for millennia. Let us not continue to do these old ways harder, louder, or more energetically. The Elijah message has never been fulfilled. Will the Lord come unless it is? To the women in this great church, you have "come to the kingdom for such a time as this."

### Summary

The five major steps in family systems theory are:

1. One or more members in the family demonstrate some stress or pathology for the whole system.

2. The system resists change even when change is for the system's own good (change back forces) and promotes negative change, such as physical, social, emotional, or mental problems in order to stabilize it.

3. Differentiation of the self "means the capacity of a family member to define his or her own life's goals and values apart from surrounding togetherness pressures, to say 'I' when others are demanding 'you' and 'we.' It includes the capacity to maintain a (relatively) nonanxious presence in the midst of anxious systems, to take maximum responsibility for one's own destiny and emotional being."<sup>34</sup>

4. "Family theory sees the entire network of the extended family system as important, and the influence of that network is considered to be significant in the here and now as well. In addition, the concept suggests that parents themselves are someone's children, even when they are adults, and that they are still part of their own sibling systems, even after marriage."<sup>35</sup>

5. "The basic law of emotional triangles is that when any two parts of a system become uncomfortable with one another, they will 'triangle in' or focus upon a third person, or issue, as a way of stabilizing their own relationship with one another."<sup>36</sup>

Certainly the Elijah message with its emphasis on resto-

ration can be summarized in this way: The only way any change can come into a system is by one person changing the way he/she functions in the family of origin. No one can change anyone else.

For 2,500 years since Malachi, controlling and oppressive patriarchal figures have failed to restore the hearts of the children. The task now should be addressed also by the women in the church, women who refuse to overcome oppression and abuse with the same, women who will learn what it means to become a differentiating person, women who have confidence in the God of heaven to empower them in this important work, and women who wish to help usher in the kingdom of God.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> "The wife's first duties were household duties. She had to grind meal, bake, wash, cook, suckle the children, prepare her husband's bed, and, as repayment for her keep (b. Ket. 58b), to work the wool by spinning and weaving (M. Ket. v.5). Other duties were that of preparing her husband's cup, and of washing his face, hands, and feet (b. Ket. 61a, cf. 4b.96a). These duties express her servile relationship with her husband; but his rights over her went even further. He laid claim to anything his wife found (M.B.M. i.5—in this she resembled a Gentile slave), as well as any earnings from her manual work, and he had the right (because of Num. 30:7-9) to annul her vows (M. Yeb. x.1). The wife was obliged to obey her husband as she would a master—the husband was called *rab*—indeed this obedience was a religious duty (CA 2.201)" (Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969], p. 369).

<sup>2</sup> "Although the connections are not always obvious, personal change is inseparable from social and political change. Intimate relationships cannot flourish under conditions of inequality and unfairness" (Harriet Goldhor Lerner, *The Dance of Intimacy* [New York: Harper & Row, 1989], p. 224).

<sup>3</sup> "The right to divorce was exclusively the husband's. . . . As for the wife, she could occasionally take things into her own hands and go back to her father's house, e.g., in case of injury received" (T. Yeb. vi.6, 247; b. Ket 57b)" (Jeremias, pp. 370, 371).

<sup>4</sup> Although many catastrophic events occurred to the Jewish nation between 440 B.C. and A.D. 70, none had such far-reaching results as the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in the first century.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of this issue, see Walter L. Callison, "Divorce, the Law, and Jesus," *Your Church* 32 (May-June, 1986): 18-22. See also Jeremias, pp. 369, 370.

<sup>6</sup> "But the lawgiver of the Romans gave virtually full power to the father over his son, even during his whole life, whether he thought proper to imprison him, to scourge him, to put him in chains and keep him at work in the fields, or to put him to death, and this even though the son was already engaged in public affairs, though he were numbered among the highest magistrates, and though he were celebrated for his zeal for the commonwealth" (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2. 26. 4).

<sup>7</sup> A girl over the age of 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ -years could not be betrothed to someone against her will. Thus, most young girls were either betrothed before that age or sold into slavery. Young girls were considered mainly as "cheap labor and a source of profit" (Jeremias, p. 364).

<sup>8</sup> See Albert Nolan, *Jesus Before Christianity* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989), pp. 50-67.

<sup>9</sup> For a thorough discussion of the house code and its origin, see David L. Balch, *Let Wives*

*Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, No. 26 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>10</sup> Harriet Goldhor Lerner, *The Dance of Anger* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Michael E. Kerr and Murray Bowen, *Family Evaluation* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988), p. 107.

<sup>12</sup> Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation* (New York: Guilford Press, 1985), p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Kerr and Bowen, p. 59.

<sup>14</sup> John Bradshaw (*Bradshaw On: The Family* [Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, Inc., 1988], p. 7) cites the "poisonous pedagogy" rules outlined by Alice Miller in her book *For Your Own Good*: "1. Adults are the masters of the dependent child. 2. Adults determine in a godlike fashion what is right and wrong. 3. The child is held responsible for the anger of adults. 4. Parents must always be shielded. 5. The child's life-affirming feelings pose a threat to the autocratic parent. 6. The child's will must be 'broken' as soon as possible. 7. All this must happen at a very early age so the child 'won't notice' and will not be able to expose the adults."

<sup>15</sup> Bradshaw: "The poisonous pedagogy is a form of violence that violates the rights of children. Such violation is then reenacted when these children become parents."

<sup>16</sup> "The poisonous pedagogy produces shame-based people who marry other shame-based people. Each has idealized the parents' rules. They raise their children the way their parents raised them. The children are shamed in the same way their parents were shamed. The cycle goes on for generations" (Bradshaw, p. 30). Notice the following statement by Bradshaw on page 62: "The first component of dysfunctional families is that they are part of a multigenerational process. The dysfunctional individuals who marry other dysfunctional individuals have come from dysfunctional families. So the cycle tends to be unbroken. Dysfunctional families create dysfunctional individuals who marry other dysfunctional individuals and create new dysfunctional families. Left to your own devices, it is very difficult to get out of the multigenerational dis-ease."

<sup>17</sup> "Soul-murder is the basic problem in the world today; it is the crisis in the family. We programmatically deny children their feelings, especially anger and sexual feelings. Once a person loses contact with his feelings, he loses contact with his body. We also monitor and control our children's desires and thoughts. To have one's feelings, body, desires, and thoughts controlled is to lose one's self. To lose one's self is to have one's soul murdered" (Bradshaw, p. 20).

<sup>18</sup> Most Christian mothers believe that "overdoing" for children is a loving act; in fact, overfunctioning deprives the child of learning to function responsibly for his or her self. Thus overfunctioning can be labeled abusive. And it also abuses the health and emotionality of the overfunctioner.

<sup>19</sup> "Systems theory explains how the poisonous pedagogy can be passed on for generations. It is in understanding your own family system that you can rediscover how this poisonous pedagogy sets you up to play a role or act out a script. Connecting with your family history, you can discover what happened to your true self" (Bradshaw, p. 38). Friedman states: "Trying to 'cure' a person in isolation from his or her family, says family theory, is misdirected, and ultimately ineffective, as transplanting a healthy organ into a body whose imbalanced chemistry will destroy the new one as it did the old."

<sup>20</sup> Lerner, *The Dance of Anger*, p. 180.

<sup>21</sup> Murray Bowen, *Family Therapy and Clinical Practice* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978), p. 495.

<sup>22</sup> Friedman, p. 19. Bradshaw (p. 27) states: "The theory of family systems accepts the family itself as a patient, with the presenting member being viewed as a sign of family psychopathology. The identified patient then becomes the symptom of the family system's dysfunctionality. The family itself is a symptom of society at large." It does appear, then, that the role of problem children in a system is "to get the family some help" (*ibid.*). This means that the whole family is in need of help, not simply the person who has the problem. Thus, if a mother or father in a family with a symptomatic child could learn to modify her or his own way of functioning in the family, the possibilities for changing the system are maximized, and the identified "sick" one no longer needs to have symptoms (Friedman, p. 18).

<sup>23</sup> Friedman, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* Friedman continues his list: "In an aged member of the family it could show up as

confusion, senility, or agitated and random behavior."

<sup>25</sup> Friedman, p. 23. Friedman (p. 20) points out that "when one part of that organism is treated in isolation from its interconnections with another, as though the problem were solely its own, fundamental change is not likely. The symptom is apt to recycle, in the same or different form, in the same or a different member."

<sup>26</sup> Friedman (p. 22) points out that "it is possible to relieve a symptom in a child by leaving him or her out of the counseling altogether; the process can also be aided by focusing instead on mother's relationship with her own mother."

<sup>27</sup> Lerner, *The Dance of Intimacy*, p. 200.

<sup>28</sup> Friedman, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> When the parents are in conflict, often an older daughter is brought into the triangle and performs as a "surrogate" wife for the father and a chosen son acts as a surrogate husband for the mother.

<sup>30</sup> John Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You* (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1988), p. 108. In this quote Bradshaw refers to his quoting from Satir and Wegscheider-Crus in his earlier book, *Bradshaw On: The Family*. Citing a very high percentage, Bradshaw believes that the figures are designed to shock one. No one really knows the correct percentage, but many therapists believe that most American families are dysfunctional.

<sup>31</sup> Bradshaw, *The Family*, p. 172.

<sup>32</sup> The Old Testament affords us two striking examples of women who accomplished what the male leaders could not do (Judges 4).

<sup>33</sup> By redemption I mean that each person becomes a real person in the sense that each takes responsibility for himself or herself without the prodding, threatening, urging, and rewarding that often accompanies a parent's motivating a child. In this chapter, to act in a redemptive way is to allow others the right and the possibility for responsible and capacitating action.

<sup>34</sup> Friedman, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> Friedman, p. 31.

<sup>36</sup> Friedman, p. 35.

## CHAPTER 8

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# Women Helping Women: A Network of Caring

DEBORAH M. HARRIS, PH.D.

### Introduction

**W**oman—uniquely created, distinctively identified, unmistakably set apart as an inherently powerful being of influence and strength whose very presence captures the heart and soul of man. Since the beginning of time she has stood alone as a multifaceted creature among creatures. No other creature has been specifically created as a “help meet.” She was perfectly designed to be the greatest companion ever known to man. She was to set the stage for generations to come. She was to show the world how God cares. God translated the depth of His love into active expression when He created Eve. Woman brought definition to God’s love for humanity. Adam’s life was not complete until Eve was created, and God was not satisfied with the creation of this world until He created Eve.

Just think of all God must have considered and consequently included in the makeup of woman to insure she possessed all the qualities necessary for her to fulfill her

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mission. Woman had to be flexible. She had to be kind-hearted, nurturing, spirited, innovative, inspirational, unrestricted, intelligent, versatile, trusting, and trustworthy. She had to be able to respond to the needs of others, and she had to be strong enough to bear the load of many. She was a woman—an awesome specimen of complexity whose tender touch could calm the fury of the enraged; whose undying devotion could give hope to the hopeless; whose wide embrace could heal the brokenhearted; whose unflinching perseverance could revive the downtrodden; whose amazing versatility could respond to the nonresponsive; whose creative vision could motivate the unmotivated; whose captivating resiliency could inspire the uninspired; and whose dedicated commitment could make the impossible possible with God.

Eve was our first teacher, and her story helps us better understand who we are, natural participants in helping relationships. We know how to be friends because we were created as a friend. We know how to help others because we were created as a “help meet.” We have been helping others since the beginning of time. We are genetically endowed with nurturing and caring abilities. Sometimes along the way, however, we often fail to realize the importance of extending those qualities beyond one-to-one relationships with our family and personal friends.

Women around the world need the natural caring abilities of other women to help encourage them as they face the overwhelming challenges of daily living. The need is great! The call is urgent! Women helping women is the necessary response. This chapter is designed to help us realize the value of our skills and traits for helping each other live more abundantly. A brief overview of how we have traditionally responded to our needs and pains as well as the needs and pains of others is also important. This discussion should help us better understand why we have allowed our contributions to be restricted and why we hesitate to move beyond those externally and often internally imposed restrictions. Finally,

we will discuss strategies for developing a network of caring, women helping women.

### **How Women in the Bible Traditionally Responded**

Eve's tragic beginning formed the foundation upon which life continues to build the framework within which women respond to the needs and pains of others as well as their own. Since Eve's invasion into the "things of God," the "I must do it all and I must do it alone" mentality has guided the behaviors of women.

Eve must have felt totally responsible for the tragic aftermath that followed her disobedience. She must have felt responsible for the murderous actions of her son, perhaps lamenting that this would have never happened if she had not disobeyed. Given her newfound knowledge of good and evil, she must have realized the terrible wrong she had done and looked for every opportunity to right that wrong.

Can you imagine the tremendous burden she must have carried? the pain she must have felt? the tremendous strength it must have taken to experience all this without the benefit of others' experiences? She was the first. She experienced everything "from childbirth to one son murdering another son and did it all without other women, history or experience behind her."<sup>1</sup> Eve had no choice. She had to bear the pain as she responded daily to the needs of those around her. We can assume that she often denied her own needs. Unfortunately, women have followed her example throughout history, and many continue to suffer unnecessarily.

What makes women prone to following Eve's example? Perhaps Eve's strength has been genetically transmitted to the generations of women who have followed her. Perhaps her example gives women the strength they need to make it against the odds, to stand alone and bear much. Women such as Jochebed, who had to bear the knowledge that her son would rescue the people of God, thus requiring her to hide her son and relinquish her claim to him in order to save him. Certainly she bore much pain and fear in order to respond to the needs of God's people.

Abigail took it upon herself to intercede in her husband's matters in order to save her entire household from destruction. As she knelt in humility before David, she accepted the blame for her husband's misconduct and offered gifts of nourishment in apology. Do we really think this beautiful woman of God desired to abase herself before David? It is doubtful. She did so and completed the task because of the need at hand. In fact, her husband's drunken state prevented him from realizing the tremendously unselfish and brave feat Abigail had planned and executed.

When Mary the mother of Jesus bore the Saviour, she also responded unselfishly, to the needs of a dying world. Her joy was unimaginable, but so was her sorrow. Living with the knowledge that she bore the Saviour had to be wonderful. However, realizing that the Saviour would be constantly under danger for His life had to produce many bitter trials for Mary. As she lived through her trials day in and day out, I am certain she wanted to cry out in agony. Mary must have longed for the support of other women living with the knowledge that their only son would die prematurely. Most of us can only imagine how difficult it was for her to bear such knowledge, suffer such pain, and suppress her own needs in order to fulfill the will of God. The Bible is replete with examples of women who survived against the odds.

### **How Women in Society Have Traditionally Responded**

More recent history is also full of stories of women who have moved forward, often alone, to accomplish the unexpected in response to the needs of others. Harriet Tubman, for example, helped hundreds of slaves escape to freedom via the infamous Underground Railroad. Her first escape was without her husband, and her first return to slave territory to assist others was after the enactment of a law that made it a crime to help a runaway slave. Regardless of personal danger, Tubman knew the need and was willing to sacrifice her life in order that others might be free. In thinking of the hundreds of miles she traveled alone in the deepest darkness, with the

constant fear of someone following, one can't help wondering how anyone could possess such strength.

Susan B. Anthony gave untiringly for a goal she did not live to see accomplished, that of women's rights. She met much resistance—she was refused public speaking privileges, and was arrested for voting illegally. In spite of these difficulties, she continued. Her persistence required unusual strength.

The subservient status of women in her day probably contributed to the fact that many women opposed her efforts. Women perhaps felt she was out of place, and they probably expressed more criticism than men about her efforts. There must have been times when she questioned whether her efforts were worth the lonely struggles. Nonetheless she continued, and as a result, we women enjoy the right to vote today.

The devotion of Clara Barton in providing relief for victims of war or other disaster led to the creation of the American Red Cross. Referred to as the "Angel of the Battlefield," Barton could not bother to worry about her own safety and well-being. Responding to a tremendous need, she worked sacrificially hard and long, and often alone.

The unselfish work of Mother Teresa has required tremendous strength. Known as the "saint of the gutters," she has withstood great hardship in order to spread the love of God in the way God intended for it to be shared. She has committed herself to the needs of the poor, and has gone far beyond what many individuals are ever willing to do.

While Rosa Parks's refusal to go to the back of a Montgomery bus was not intended as a response to the needs of others, her strong stand and courageous persistence was the catalyst for civil rights in the United States. Many individuals gained strength from her stand and are now willing to speak out against injustice. They are willing to fight for the right to have a drug-free neighborhood. They are willing to speak out against the injustice of sexual harassment in the workplace. They are willing to expose the inequalities that women face in the home, community, and church. Rosa

Parks exhibited the kind of courage and strength that keeps the women of today holding on to the smallest source of relief as they face their often overwhelming daily challenges.

The 1992 woman may not ever make it into the history books of the United States, but her courage, stamina, and strength cannot go unnoticed. The woman of today has many responsibilities, ranging from wife to mother to provider to child bearer to friend to housekeeper to cook to fulfilling an endless list of roles. From the time she rises until the late hours of the night she is on the job, responding to all those who have expectations of her. Without conscientious effort she will never have time to be good to herself. She consistently carries the burdens of others, and often assumes the responsibility for their mistakes. She tends to be more critical than necessary of her own shortcomings, and she often tries to carry the load alone.

Society does not adequately adjust its expectations to accommodate the expanded responsibilities of women unless women take matters into their own hands. The incentive for change is enhanced when women become aware of the factors that affect the quality of their daily lives. For example, Nancy Van Pelt reports that women who work outside the home average 20 to 25 fewer minutes of sleep per night than their husbands, who get 7 to 8 hours a night. The mother of a child under the age of 3 loses another 45 to 50 minutes, which amounts to almost one complete night of rest missed per week. She further states that women with children under 5 years of age average 22.5 hours of housework a week. Finally, Van Pelt states, women in two-career families continue to carry a far greater portion of the responsibility associated with running a home and raising children than do their husbands. While 90 percent of the housework is caused by men and children, approximately 90 percent of the cleaning is done by women. As a consequence, women are burned out and feel alienated and resentful toward their husbands, who often cling to traditional roles.<sup>2</sup>

For the most part women are withstanding the pressure, but not without significant cost to physical, mental, emo-

tional, and spiritual well-being. Women today need each other in order to fulfill their many responsibilities. Many may feel they have to do it alone. But we do not have to respond to our plight as Eve did to hers. We can reach out to one of the most valuable resources we possess—each other.

We would be remiss to discuss the struggles and strengths of women without acknowledging the contributions of Ellen G. White. Her response to the call of God made it possible for God's remnant church to learn the truth of a risen Saviour and His plan for salvation. Surely we can imagine the tremendous burden that Ellen White felt as she bore this responsibility. Additionally, to be subjected to the criticisms, accusations, and doubts of others must have burdened her the more. She moved forward, however, with unflinching commitment to fulfill the will of God. If we think for one minute her task was easy, we grossly underestimate the desire Satan has to keep us from learning of the blessed truth of God.

I am certain Ellen White faced many challenges. Her maternal responsibilities were ever before her. Her marital obligations could not be set aside. She traveled many arduous miles to respond to the needs of people. If not for her strength, her willingness, her ability to bear much, and for the help of God, she could not have brought the truth to those who were suffering from spiritual malnutrition.

### **Our Challenge**

From Eve to Ellen White to the woman of the 1990s, women have withstood the unimaginable in order to respond to the needs of others. Our foremothers often had no choice but to do it alone. Perhaps they were breaking new ground or they did not recognize the power of women helping other women. Maybe they did recognize that other women could be a tremendous source of help, but they avoided seeking that help for fear of negative consequences. Maybe they did not want to deviate from what was expected of them. Some may have even feared being categorized as radical or feminist. Many may have felt there was no other way, or they did not

know how to seek help. They just did what they had to do.

Women need to realize that we don't have to suffer and labor alone anymore. Women must use their God-given skills of nurturing, gentleness, adaptability, encouragement, and strength to help each other live more abundantly. First, we must come together as a unified force, responding not only to the needs of others but also to ourselves as well. In so doing, we will challenge and threaten some of the institutionalized expectations others have of us, which may result in some major obstacles. However, we can draw on the strength of our Saviour, who knows our obstacles.

Second, as we uniformly move ahead, we must be careful to maximize our positive skills and minimize our more negative tendencies. Women helping women must not be weakened by betrayal, gossip, and sabotage of one another. It is important that we move from "sabotage to support" in our response to each other.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, we need strategies for changing the course we have traveled so many years. Intuitively, we know how to help each other, but the forum has not always been accepted and/or available. Additionally, our efforts need to be well planned and organized, and should be accessible to all women. Our strategies for helping each other should be comprehensive, providing opportunities for rest and relaxation, counsel, and personal enrichment and development. The remainder of this chapter will address some strategies we can employ to facilitate women helping women.

### **Strategies for Women Helping Women**

The creation of the Women's Commission in the Seventh-day Adventist Church was undoubtedly the working of God. Under its new name, Women's Ministries, hundreds of women are being helped and lives are being changed. Opportunities for fellowship and sharing have been afforded via events such as women's retreats, enrichment seminars, and prayer breakfasts.

Women's Ministries has also given many women a context or structure within which to define their roles in the

church. Since its inception, women feel more a part of the workings of the church, they have more of a sense of ownership. It represents opportunity for growth and greater service to God.

The primary objective that I see Women's Ministries fulfilling is in providing a means to bring women together and to unify them with a common sense of serving humanity and preparing for the soon-coming Saviour. This is most evident in the various programs that have been established to help women better cope with daily challenges.

Much has been learned about the needs of women by giving them the opportunity to lay aside their daily work and come together in a sharing mode. We have learned that women are hurting. They are lonely. They are carrying self-destructive baggage from abused childhoods, disastrous marriages, and the disappointment of wayward children. This baggage has crippled their growth. We have learned that women are begging for support and encouragement. They are hungry for knowledge that will help them be better persons. They are struggling with low self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness. Desperation seems to be the common cry. They need a break. They need help. They need encouragement. They need prayer. They need a caring church to respond to their needs. They are overwhelmed, and immediate action is necessary.

Women's Ministries provided the forum for the response, but how do we address the needs? The first steps have been taken. Women are coming together, realizing that we have a lot in common. Regardless of cultural, racial, and spiritual differences, we share many of the same struggles and have many of the same needs. It is important for us to recognize that one of our best sources of help is each other. Therefore, a network of caring, women helping women, needs to be established.

This network of caring should be in direct response to the needs. For example, it would make little sense to develop a knitting class if that does not represent a primary need for women. More appropriate might be the establishment of a



mother's support group. Another example might be to establish a spouse abuse support group or a single parent's relief group. While most churches and conferences are providing these specific programs, efforts should also be made to address the underlying needs of the larger population of women.

One such attempt is the establishment of a Christian telephone counseling network. The Department of Women's Ministries in the South Atlantic Conference of Seventh-day Adventists set up a crisis helpline in the fall of 1989. The need for a counseling service was evident, given the enormous pressures women face daily, trying to be everything to everybody. However, we found that many women hesitated to seek counseling because of lack of finances or for fear that the counselor may not have a spiritual background or may not be able to identify with her struggles. This was particularly true among minority populations.

Recognizing that the preparation of qualified counselors would entail, at a minimum, a four- to six-year process, another response was planned. Telephone counselors were trained; classes were conducted by Skip Hunt, president of Christian Helpline, Inc. The first class comprised approximately 50 individuals. Other classes followed, until approximately 150 individuals were certified as Christian telephone counselors. With this force of prepared counselors, under the direction of Mrs. Irene Bowden of Atlanta, there was established the Save Our Sisters (SOS) Christian Helpline.

Officially opening its doors in the fall of 1991, this telephone counseling service is equipped to handle crisis calls, listen to the needs of individuals, make referrals to other agencies, conduct training, and offer seminars. The helpline serves as a tremendous witnessing tool, responding to the needs of women across the nation. Women can feel confident that their call will be answered by a well-trained, certified, Christian female counselor. That itself can serve as a testimony to the love of God and the power of women helping each other.

A telephone ministry can also be a source of support for

ministers. The demands for services by ministers far exceed what they can reasonably handle, especially in the area of counseling. In the book *Evangelism* Ellen White stresses the need for women counselors; she admonishes women to take their troubles to other women.<sup>4</sup> This advice is beneficial for two reasons. First, it protects many men from the mistake of making overly sympathetic responses to women in trouble. Second, it encourages women to help themselves.

Retreats are another great mechanism for providing opportunities for women to relax, share, and grow. Programs such as Moms in Touch, where mothers come together to pray for their children, and Welcome Baby, where parenting skills are taught to expectant mothers, are important parts of a network of caring. The numbers of enrichment seminars, women day programs, male appreciation days, and weight-loss programs speak to the comprehensiveness of a network of caring that women across this nation are establishing. We are coming together to address our own needs for a change, and the result will benefit men, women, and children.

We cannot allow ourselves to be complacent and grow stale. Opportunities for growth must constantly be available. We can create many of our own opportunities just by knowing the talents and skills of women around this nation. Conducting a survey in order to establish a skills bank is an excellent way to determine the talents of women. Having this information facilitates the referral of individuals for presentations, leadership development, and other specialized opportunities.

Women need opportunity for growth, and they need opportunities for exposure. Often they are denied such opportunities because the universe of official positions is already nearly filled by men. Within the context of Women's Ministries, opportunities can be designed specifically for women, giving them exposure and experience that will, undoubtedly, open up to them other opportunities.

But providing opportunity is not enough; we must also prepare individuals to respond when opportunity knocks. Leadership training institutes can help prepare women for

leadership in the church and community. These should be conducted on a regular basis.

Finally, a network of caring, of women helping women, will provide a good training ground for our daughters. A young woman can best learn how to be a mature woman by the teachings and modeling of another woman.

The network we have recently begun to establish must not die. And it will continue, because its worth is evident. The generations of women that follow, should time last, must not be subjected to many of the pains we have suffered because we tried to handle everything on our own. Future generations will know the power of women united to help one another. Theirs will be a society of less-overwhelmed women, women who know how to look out for themselves while continuing to assist others.

### Conclusion

While the list of strategies we have discussed here is not exhaustive, it represents the many things we can do to establish a network of caring. Women need each other, even though our history reveals how we achieved much without help. We are strong, but we need support. We are able to bear great pain, but we need to share our pains. We have achieved, but we still need encouragement and development. We are able to fulfill many obligations simultaneously, but we need others to share in the responsibility.

No one better understands the trials of a woman than another woman. "No man, however eloquent, can speak for woman as woman can for herself."<sup>5</sup> How can we afford not to help each other?

All the ingredients for establishing a network of caring have been in place since the beginning of time. Those ingredients are a natural part of who women are. Somewhere along the way, however, we have failed to activate that network to help other women. We have focused our attention on others, but to continue to ignore our own needs is to contribute to the deterioration of womanhood. It is our

responsibility as women to develop and maintain a network of caring among ourselves.

It has been said that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. This cliché is reflective of the tremendous influence women have. If appropriately applied, this influence can change lives for the better. If inappropriately applied, it can destroy. Women helping women is a network of caring designed to build lives for more abundant living.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Joyce Heatherly, *He Began With Eve* (Austin, Tex.: Balcony Publishing, 1983), p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Van Pelt, "Fast Facts for Females," *Better Living Programs* (1990), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Briles, *Woman to Woman: From Sabotage to Support* (Far Hill, N.J.: New Horizon Press, 1989), p. 294.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 460.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Douglass, excerpt from a speech presented to a woman suffrage convention in the 1800s.

## CHAPTER 9

# How Society Affects Social Change in Today's Church

*PENNY SHELL, ED.D.*

Christian people are not “of the world,” but they are definitely “in the world,” affected by the events and changes of society, limited by the law and government, by economics, and by the tastes and customs of the places and times in which they live.

The laws and government of our society limit or extend our freedom to worship and to work as Adventist Christians. The economic fortunes of our society determine our own chances for prosperity. Church growth experts have noted that even our evangelistic success is often tied to upheavals in society. Attitudes and customs in the world around us also affect the way Christians look at things.

Attitudes toward women in the church and in society have often run parallel. Those times when women's roles were restricted to certain spheres of service and activity have been comfortable—secure and predictable—for both women and men in both church and society. It is when women's roles expand to include more privileges that a sense of alarm begins.

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But each expansion of women's roles has been made in the face of opposition. To some it has seemed that truths about the very nature of women have been challenged. One professor in the past century argued against women's ordination to the ministry by asserting that women are "emotional, physically delicate, illogical, weak-voiced, vain, dependent, and, most important, divinely ordained to be homemakers."<sup>1</sup>

In an unpublished paper Lorna Tobler quotes from an 1872 Supreme Court ruling in which Justice Joseph Bradley stated that "the natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life. The constitution of the family organization, which is found in the divine ordinance, as well as in the nature of things, indicates the domestic sphere as that which properly belongs to the domain and functions of womanhood."<sup>2</sup> This ruling, as Tobler points out, was not to protect women from hard factory labor or farm work. Rather, the judge was ruling against Myra Bradwell's request for a license to practice law in the state of Illinois.<sup>3</sup>

Nineteenth-century arguments against women's expanding roles, Tobler showed, were often based on their "special" role and nature. Women of the time exposed the hidden agenda of such reasoning in stirring speeches, such as that of Rose Schneiderman, answering a New York senator who said women might lose their femininity if they were allowed to exercise civil rights: "We have working women in the foundries, stripped to the waist, if you please, because of the heat. Yet the senator says nothing about these women losing their charm. . . . Women in the laundries, for instance, stand for 13 or 14 hours in the terrible steam and heat with their hands in hot starch. Surely these women won't lose any more of their beauty and charm by putting a ballot in a ballot box once a year."<sup>4</sup>

Men were not slow to argue that women's physical weakness indicated their inability to exercise civil rights. One of the most memorable rebuttals to this argument of a minister came from a freed slave, Sojourner Truth, during a

speech at a woman's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851: "That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place—and ain't I a woman?"

"Look at this arm! I have plowed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me—and ain't I a woman?"

"I could work as much and eat as much as a man (when I could get it), and bear the lash as well—and ain't I a woman?"

"I have borne 13 children and seen most of 'em sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard—and ain't I a woman?"<sup>5</sup>

In spite of the objections of society, the role of women has continued to expand and change. Women have won the vote. They have secured the right to own property in their own names, and obtained legal custody of their children. They have opened doors of educational and other institutions previously reserved for men.

Several factors in the past quarter century have given impetus to expanding roles for women. Because access to equality and protection from discrimination has been supported in the courts since the 1964 Civil Rights Act's Title VII, new opportunities exist for personal and professional development. And positions of leadership and authority that earlier generations didn't know a woman could handle are now filled by many capable women administrators and officials.

Legal support for women's expanded opportunities has followed the women's movement, which grew out of the civil rights efforts for African-Americans in the 1960s. Whether one condemns or applauds the women's movement, one can't deny its influence in making women more aware of their own potential. A declining birth rate since the 1960s has meant that women are spending less time in child rearing and have had more years for study and career development. Even

women who have had several children are now more likely to return to school and begin or continue a career after their children are in school.<sup>6</sup>

Along with other Protestant churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church must decide how to respond to the changes in women's roles in American society. Consider these recommendations to church officials that have grown out of Adventist women's present concerns: (1) provide individual and family counseling for ministers and their families in each union conference; (2) begin a General Conference data bank of qualified women and minorities to help church institutional structures hire these neglected groups; (3) establish an Adventist center for women's studies; (4) provide child care at all Adventist meetings; (5) create support groups for single parents, the grieving, the divorced, etc.; (6) provide child care facilities for working mothers; and (7) give full and equal support to women who are called to the gospel ministry.

A close look at these last two recommendations will illustrate the implications that events and attitudes have upon the church.

### **Working Mothers and the Need for Child Care**

More married women with children work outside their homes than ever before. While the 80 percent of single women who work for pay has not changed significantly since 1950, more married women are now in the work force. In fact, that number of employed married women with preschoolers has increased from 10 percent at the end of World War II to more than 50 percent in 1985.<sup>7</sup>

Why do wives and mothers, often with their husbands' strong encouragement, work outside their home? Some work to make ends meet—to make house payments, to pay medical and educational expenses for the family. Some work to make life more pleasant and efficient—to afford music lessons, a second car, a family vacation. Others work because they feel they can be happier wives and mothers—better persons—if they have an outside interest of their own. Some mothers work to stay in the job market so they can support themselves



should the need arise. Some work because they find it a way to contribute their skills and talents to church and society.

Some women work because they sense a special calling, as did Ellen White.

Some women are heads of households, the major or sole support for their families. Women heads of households include mothers who are widowed, divorced, or have never married. They also include women whose husbands are disabled, in school, or out of work for any reason.

Even though the vast majority of married women who work for pay choose or are forced to take jobs that allow them more time for their families (or jobs that are less demanding and less rewarding), the fact remains that since more than half of mothers with young children are now working, a real problem of child care has developed.<sup>8</sup>

Many mothers are able to arrive at their own solutions to child care. For example, soon after Pat and Russell married, Russell's career took them to a city with a very high cost of living. Fortunately Pat was able to find a good position that used her special talents and interests. Baby John's arrival coincided with a promotion for Pat to a better-paying job in which she could use her abilities more fully. Russell's career, however, had reached a point where he needed more time at home to study and write. Leaving his job, Russell became John's primary care-giver while Pat continued to work outside the home. Their nontraditional but creative solution to their family's needs not only provided child care but also allowed each parent to move ahead professionally.

Ellen and James found a more difficult solution when they followed God's call into a team ministry that required a great deal of travel. They left their little son, Henry, with friends. Ellen White wrote: "We must sacrifice the company of our little Henry, and go forth to give ourselves unreservedly to the work. . . . I dared not let my child stand in the way of our duty. . . . We left him in Brother Howland's family. We knew that they could take better care of Henry than we could, and it was for his good that he should have a steady place."<sup>9</sup>

When Jackie's husband left her, she was thankful to find a job by which she could support herself, and she was fortunate in that her parents could care for her children. When Ruth, a single woman, felt led to adopt two children whose parents could no longer care for them, she began to trade baby-sitting times with other missionary families, and was occasionally able to take her children to her place of work.

Pat, Ellen, Jackie, and Ruth were each able to find a way to work and to care for their children. Many others do not have such good options for child care, however. How does the increase in working mothers and the problem of child care affect the church, especially a church with a strong belief in the importance of the early years of child training?

Some see the church's only responsibility as that of saying more loudly that mothers should stay home with their children. They would like to turn back the clock. They are uncomfortable with the fact that society has changed, that the problem exists. Like the person in James 2:16 who says to the brother or sister without clothes and food, "Keep warm and well fed," some in the church would tell mothers, "If you can't afford to live where you are without working, move." Simplistic answers do not demonstrate Christian caring or make the church inviting to those whose needs are too easily dismissed.

One creative answer to the problem is the creation of Adventist child care centers, such as can be found at the North Shore Seventh-day Adventist Church in Chicago, Illinois; Loma Linda University SDA Church in California; and Shawnee Mission Medical Center in Shawnee Mission, Kansas.

Candy Seltman, who directs the Shawnee Mission Medical Child Care Center, is a mother who chose to stay home when her own children were young. But she knows that many mothers do not have that choice as an option. So Candy and the 44 staff members under her direction provide excellent care for more than 500 children every day.

The children have special opportunities not usually avail-

able at home, such as music lessons, physical education instruction, and social interaction. The center endeavors to avoid a stressful, competitive environment. As long as children are considerate of other people, they are given choices about what they may do. One parent wrote Candy, "Thank you for providing a wonderful, loving environment for Sarah and Jonathan. They have blossomed into healthy, happy little people as a result of your caring."<sup>10</sup>

Such a response to the needs of mothers in today's society makes the church a supportive and attractive place rather than a place that is judgmental or even irrelevant.

### **Expanding Professional Roles and the Call to Ministry**

More women are professionally educated, trained, and employed than ever before. Several sociological factors help explain this trend. The number of female college graduates—the women most likely to pursue professional employment—has increased. In 1950 fewer than a third of the bachelor's degrees granted were to women. In the 1970s, that component stood at 45 percent.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, an increasing number of women have been entering traditionally male professions such as law, medicine, and ministry. In 1930, 2.1 percent of lawyers and judges were female; in 1980 the figure stood at 12.8 percent. For the same years, the female component of physicians, surgeons, and osteopaths was 4.6 percent and 10.8 percent, respectively.<sup>12</sup>

Of special interest to the church is the growing number of women who go into careers in ministry. An increase from 2.2 percent of clergy in 1930 to 4.2 percent 50 years later is surprising in a profession that has been not only masculine but "sacredly masculine."<sup>13</sup> Yet thousands of women now serve as fully credentialed clergy, and the increasing enrollment of women in most Protestant seminaries indicates the numbers will grow. In 1980 women represented 21.8 percent, which increased to 29.6 percent in 1990.

Specific experiences of several Protestant churches illustrate this trend.<sup>14</sup> For example, the 292 women who pastored Assemblies of God churches in 1977 comprised about 3

percent of their total pastoral staff. In addition to active pastors, nearly 1,600 women were ordained, and another 1,600 licensed to perform ministerial duties.

While this may seem a large number of women set apart for ministry, it is small for a church that has assumed from its beginnings in the early 1900s that gifts of the Spirit and ministries of the Spirit are given without regard to gender. The general secretary of the denomination, Joseph R. Flower, wrote against the human prejudice that stands in the way of God's using more women.<sup>15</sup> At least partly in response to that appeal, in 1990 and 1991 the percentage of women clergy was 11.6 percent and 15 percent respectively.

In the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., the 104 ordained women ministers are about 4.3 percent of the clergy. This too is a small percentage for a church that has ordained women since the end of the nineteenth century. A two-year survey conducted in 1976-1978 indicated numerous areas of discrimination that contribute to the low percentage, and recommendations to reduce discrimination were being acted upon within the denominational structure. As of 1990 and 1991, the percentage of female clergy remained at approximately 4.

The conservative Southern Baptist Convention holds strongly to teachings of "woman's place" in society and in Christian service. Although since 1964 it has been possible for women to be ordained to the ministry, church teachings stress mission work and mission teaching, not the pastorate, as the place for women's work. In 1992, there were 13 women among 64,000 persons serving as ordained pastors. Forty-eight women have served as pastors over the past 10 years. Approximately 900 women have been ordained since 1964. However, chaplaincy has been the main post to which these women were assigned.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has ordained women to the ministry since the early 1800s. It instituted an affirmative action program during the 1970s to encourage women into training, pastoring, and administering, resulting in 388 women clergy (5.7 percent) in 1977, down slightly to

317 in 1981. In 1991 women clergy totaled 927, representing 16 percent of the total clergy.

The Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, a very conservative branch of that church, has traditionally held to a very restrictive scriptural interpretation that prevents women from holding pastoral offices as well as participating in other ways. Only in 1969 were women granted permission to vote in local congregational matters. As of this writing, there are no ordained women clergy in the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church.

Two major Lutheran churches (since merged) voted in 1970 to ordain women. The American Lutheran Church had a relatively small number of women clergy. Ninety-three women constituted 1.3 percent of the total in 1981; this was up from 18 women clergy in 1977. That this percentage exists at all is probably a result of an affirmative action document, "Women and Men in Church and Society—Toward Wholeness in the Christian Community," produced by the church in 1972. The document, which takes note of the changing roles of men and women in family and in society, gives numerous suggestions for encouraging women's full participation in the life and ministry of the church.

The Lutheran Church in America (LCA) also worked actively to include women in professional leadership roles. In 1981, 210 women comprised 2.6 percent of LCA clergy. In January 1988 the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran churches merged as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As of December 1991, the 1,400 ordained women comprised 8 percent of their total number of ordained clergy.

Throughout its history the Methodist Church has encouraged women to preach, but only in 1956 voted "full clergy rights for women." In 1981, 1,316 women (3.6 percent of the total clergy) served in the United Methodist Church. In 1980, 29 percent of its seminarians were women. Also in 1980, the church ordained its first woman bishop, Marjorie Swank Matthews, a native of Onaway, Michigan; she now ordains other women and men to the ministry. In 1991, of the 31,840

clergy, 5,086, or 16 percent, are women, an increase from 6.5 percent in 1985.

The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. also voted in 1956 to ordain women, and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. followed in 1964. In 1981 they had 4.5 and 3.3 percent women clergy, respectively, a combined total of more than 800 women clergy. Both denominations had groups actively working to facilitate inclusiveness and opportunity for women. These two groups merged in 1983 to become the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); as of 1990, 11 percent of their total clergy were women.

In 1991 there were 1,822 female clergy in the Episcopal Church, which is 12 percent of the 14,900 total ordained clergy. The Episcopal Church was one of the last "mainline" denominations to approve the ordination of women. This approval came in 1976, two years after 11 women were ordained without an official policy in place. One of the women priests told of a comment made by the rector at this "early" ordination:

"He gave an illustration that went something like this: 'If the Church Fathers still claimed that women's time had not yet come in the church, they should take note that, even though her obstetrician tells a woman that she will give birth on August 15, if the baby is coming on July 29, it is the woman and the baby who are right, not the obstetrician.' . . . Then the opening hymn was announced: 'Come, Labor On!'"<sup>16</sup>

Women and men in the Seventh-day Adventist Church as well have become more aware of the possibility of including women in every aspect of church ministry and administration.

How does our church respond? As with the working mothers discussed earlier, some church members just wish the problem would go away. They would like to turn back the clock to an earlier time before churches worried about women's expanding roles in the church. Some would like, at least, to stop the clock. They affirm women's participation in the many ways women have traditionally worked in the

church, but they object strongly to today's professional women moving into positions of authority, such as the ministry or administration. They charge that women who support the ordination of women are seeking their own glory, not God's, and suggest that a truly godly woman can work without benefit of ordination.

But is it possible for a church to set aside the greater awareness of women's expanding contributions in all aspects of Christian ministry and leadership today? Dare any church fail to recognize the work of any group whom the Holy Spirit calls?

Other voices in the church are more encouraging, seeing women's expanded role as the church moving in response to the Holy Spirit, as it has moved to institute many other changes in the past.

Explaining his pilgrimage from opposition to support for ordaining women elders in the lay ministry of the church, Dwight Nelson, senior pastor of Andrews University's Pioneer Memorial church, stressed the importance of ordination for women to their ministry by pointing out that ordination is not based on gender but on the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. "If the thought of ordaining a woman seems amazing to us," Nelson said, "we must hear the words of Peter, who stood in dumfounded shock when he witnessed God's Spirit poured out on Gentiles: 'Who was I to think that I could oppose God?' (Acts 11:17, NIV)."<sup>17</sup>

"At the heart of the issue of ordination," said Louis Venden, pastor of the Loma Linda University church, "are the gifts and the call of God. If we think we can solve it through our committee actions, we are dangerously close to arrogance."<sup>18</sup>

It is a strange thing to hear some today object to using women's talents in administration and ministry because this is "following after the world." For years the church has been following after the world in repressing women's contributions and constricting their roles. In fact, it has occasionally led the world in this un-Christlike activity, supplying Bible texts to justify such actions, even as many churches once did

to justify slavery.<sup>19</sup> When those were strong cultural elements, the texts used to support them seemed valid. Today they don't.

If the women's movement has suggested that changes need to be made within the church, such change allows us who are the church to act in harmony with Christ's empowerment of women. It prevents us from sinning against the Holy Spirit, who is poured on all flesh, and calls our sons and our daughters.

Women's participation in ministry follows the work of Christ more than that of "the world." Society is still trying to empty its pockets of discrimination. Even churches that have opened the way for women in ordained ministry still include only a small percentage of women and can document continuing roadblocks thrown up in their paths.

People often respond to social influences around them, whether or not they are aware of that fact. Preventing women's ordination, for example, is more likely tied to cultural traditions than to any of the biblical texts used against it. (The same was true with doctrines of the divine right of kings, the arguments for the persecution of heretics, and the preservation of slavery, all of which were supported in their day by quoting Scripture.)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> W. Carroll Jackson, Barbara Hargrove, and Adair T. Lummis, *Women of the Cloth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Leo Kanowitz, *Sex Roles in Law and Society* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), p. 43. Quoted in Lorna Tobler, "A More Faithful Witness" (unpublished paper presented at the sixteenth annual meeting of the West Coast Religion Teachers Conference, May 2-4, 1986), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Tobler, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> From an address, "Senators Versus Working Women," given at Cooper Union before the Wage Earners Suffrage League of New York, Mar. 29, 1912, p. 5. Quoted in Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle* (New York: Antheneum, 1972), p. 154. Quoted in Tobler, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> From Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Matilda Gage, *The History of Women Suffrage* (Rochester, N.Y.: 1881), vol. 1, p. 116. Quoted in Tobler, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Carroll et al., p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> George Gilder, "Women in the Work Force," *The Atlantic* (September 1986), p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), vol. 2, pp. 107, 108. Quoted in Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., *I'd Like to Ask Sister White* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1965), p. 66.



<sup>10</sup> Andy Demsky, "Candy Seltman Directs Care Center for 500 Children," *The Adventist Woman* (March 1987), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Carroll et al., pp. 9, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Carroll et al., p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Carroll et al., p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> The numbers and percentages of women clergy discussed here are based primarily on information found in the chapter "The Ordination of Women: Present-Day Attitudes" in E. Margaret Howe's *Women and Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: 1982), pp. 129-160. This is supplemented by numbers and percentages of women clergy found in Carroll et al. (p. 6) and numbers and percentages of women seminary students in Carroll et al. (p. 7).

The statistical figures for 1989-1991 have been obtained from the women's commission or women's ministries or statistical offices of the main headquarters of the respected denomination. All information was obtained by Human Relations Department staff by telephone between January 10 and January 22, 1992. The *1991 YearBook of American and Canadian Churches, 1991* (ed. Constant M. Jarquet, Jr., and Alice M. Jones [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991], pp. 58-125) was used as a source for telephone numbers. Calls to local churches in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan area were also made to obtain the appropriate telephone numbers for certain denominations.

<sup>15</sup> Howe, p. 139.

<sup>16</sup> Alla Bozarth-Campbell, *Womanpriest* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 130.

<sup>17</sup> Dwight Nelson, "Two-Party Trap" (sermon, Pioneer Memorial SDA Church, Berrien Springs, Michigan, Apr. 4, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> Penny Shell, "Consternation, Celebration," *The Adventist Woman* (December 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Roger Dudley, "Ordination of Women: A Question of Status or Function?" *Ministry* (October 1985), p. 20.

## CHAPTER 10

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# Living Beyond Gender Stereotypes

*IRIS M. YOB, ED.D.*

**L**iving beyond gender stereotypes is living to our strengths and not our weaknesses. It is transcending imposed roles and definitions, and revealing our godlikeness as creatures in God's image. It challenges us to a fuller realization of our potential, to greater self-understanding, to wider aspects of personal growth, and to deeper fulfillment through service. It means becoming all that God intends for us to be.

Many of the limits we experience in our lives are self-imposed, and some of our most destructive self-limiting appears as gender role stereotyping. The human family has come to believe that half its members cannot, should not, and dare not be aggressive, ambitious, competitive, athletic, self-reliant, individualistic, and forceful, while the other half cannot, should not, and dare not be gentle, sensitive, nurturing, and empathetic.

Society rewards those who stay within the limits and sets up obstacles and punishments for those who stray beyond them. The rewards and punishments are subtle but powerful:

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approval-disapproval, acceptance-rejection, encouragement-discouragement, and praise-ridicule. We develop a theology, economic and social structures, educational system, and all-pervasive mass media to reinforce the stereotypes.

Both women and men suffer under these limitations, but women tend to be the more adversely affected. In part, this is because of the "masculine" qualities of aggression, ambition, self-reliance, forcefulness, and individuality, which are more highly prized and more essential for success in the world as we have made it, than the "feminine" qualities of sensitivity, gentleness, nurturance, warmth, and sympathy. The "masculine" attributes are more clearly related to success, prestige, and power. In the end, women with all the cultivated "feminine" qualities often feel they are unnoticed, without influence, and powerless.

Our best response to gender stereotyping is not in encouraging men to live like women, or vice versa. That is merely to exchange one set of limitations for another. Rather, it is to live beyond any artificial boundaries of gender-typing. Such persons do not let biology determine personality. They do not permit reproductive roles to preset the working, playing, worshiping, parenting, learning, or working roles. They rejoice in both their gender and their personness, with the former an integral part of the latter. The woman is glad to be a woman, a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother, and a *person*. The man is glad to be a man, a son, a brother, a husband, a father, and a *person*.

Persons who live beyond imposed gender role limitations are more flexible, and therefore able to bring to a wide variety of situations the behavior appropriate to that situation, not merely what is appropriate for that gender. Within the personality there is room to develop both gentleness and aggression, nurturance and dominance, humility and ambition, warmth and self-reliance. Nonstereotyped humans are fully functioning, fully developed, and fully free to be themselves, and productive of greater good in the home, the church, and the community.

### The Biblical Perspective

The Scriptures are much less restrictive about gender roles than have been the inheritors of the Judeo-Christian traditions. The Bible story shows that God's dealings with the members of the human family have not been determined by their gender. God has been pleased to receive whoever will hear and come for salvation, for enlightenment, for communion, and for service. In the kingdom, "there is neither . . . male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, NIV).

God functions toward us both as a mother and as a father, and embodies the best of both the gentle "feminine" qualities and the strong "masculine" qualities in a way that shows their complementarity and fullest harmony.

The scriptural picture of femaleness and maleness emerges, in part, from the account of Creation and the lives of some of the ancient heroines and heroes of the biblical narrative. It reveals that the categories of "masculine" and "feminine" qualities that we so rigorously apply today are artificial.

### Origins of Humankind

Both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, for "God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion. . . .' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:26, 27, NRSV). Genesis obviously does not try to delineate gender roles. The first couple are companions from the start, sharing equally the tasks and joys of primordial life.

Being in the image of God brings special privileges, gifts, and responsibilities. First, it is apparent that humankind alone, as God's representative, has the capacity and the imperative to take care of the planet. To both human parents was given *dominion* over the earth. Adam and Eve were to tend the garden and build their home. They were to "fill the earth and subdue it." They were to rule "over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing

that moves on the earth" (verse 28, NRSV). They were both charged with bringing children into the world and raising them to share in these tasks. They were made "one flesh" to stand in equality before God as caretakers of the earth.

Second, the image of God further distinguishes humanity from the rest of creation by bestowing *rationality* on the human race. We can think, abstract, reason, learn, imagine, plan, decide, remember, and choose. As a consequence, we can live meaningful lives and care for the world we have been given—and we are to be held accountable for how we have used these gifts.

Third, *individuality* is an inseparable part of the image of God. Despite the fact that many billions of human beings have walked this earth, not one of them is a duplicate of any others. You and I are unique. We are distinctively different from each other in inherited potential, upbringing, and experience. We should not be afraid to discover our specialness, for God has a plan and a place for each one of us. Individuality is our power to think and to do as self-determining and responsible human beings.

Fourth, as creatures made in the image of God we have been given a measure of *independence*. This freedom operates in a world that is predictable and knowable, and an environment that is designed to support life and call into play our unique gifts. We need not be governed by instinct, but by mind. Nor are we automatons or puppets in divine hands, for God wants to relate to us as free-willing beings. As a human family, we have made some horrifying choices, but God still respects our freedom and preserves it, even in the face of our rebellion and destructiveness.

Fifth, in an important sense our likeness to the Creator is evidenced in our own *creative abilities*. The world and our own lives are given into our hands to make something of them. Our creativity has been manifested in the cultural, scientific, social, political, aesthetic, and religious worlds we have developed. We design, build, invent, decorate, write literature, make music, form hypotheses, develop strategies,

sculpture marble, and re-create historical events because we are like our Maker.

Sixth, the image of God is as much a *way of being* as it is a collection of specific attributes. As the Godhead whom we image is an indivisible unity of three Persons, so humankind is an indivisible unity of male and female. We are able to relate to each other in loyalty, mutuality, and moral integrity. We are also able to relate to God as God reaches out to us. We love, and care, and worship because we are made that way.

Human beings are to mature and develop. Life is not a static possession but a dynamic process. Even for Adam and Eve, each new day drew them into discovery and growth. And although we live under the blight of sin, discovery and growth can still be experienced, for something still remains of the image of God—we retain a measure of control over our environment, of rationality, of individuality, of freedom, of creativity, and of the ability to relate in mutuality and love toward our fellow beings and toward God.

Stereotyping, including gender-typing, is a threat to all these qualities of our creation. It lessens our sense of control over our environment by prescribing, from a narrow base of considerations, what is proper for us to do in it. It takes over some of the tasks of thinking, purposing, deciding, and choosing by providing ready-made patterns for us to follow. It limits our individuality by imposing prescriptive roles on us. It threatens our sense of independence and freedom by locking us into predesigned lifestyles. It circumscribes our creative endeavors by focusing our aspirations within certain spheres of activity and to certain levels of success. To regulate our relationships and our forms of service, ministry, and worship along the lines of gender is to restrict our personal and spiritual development.

### Significant Examples

In the biblical narrative we meet some of God's great champions of faith. Two things about these people become apparent: first, they, like us, were fallible, mortal beings in

need of the grace of God; second, they were not limited by gender, race, or class in their work for God. They lived effective lives because they took their cues not from the expectations of others but from the call of God.

The women God used were womanly. They personified what we have come to know as the gentle traits of their gender. But they also combined these with the strength, aggressiveness, and determination that we have come to attribute more typically to their brothers. Their "femininity" was made effective for good by being part of a wider spectrum of behaviors.

We see in Naomi, for instance, a loving and dedicated wife and mother who knew the joys and sorrows of having a family of growing boys, whose sweet nature made even her daughters-in-law love her, but who was decisive and self-reliant when it came to making a life for herself and the remnants of her family.

Ruth was a loyal and devoted daughter-in-law who learned through hard work how to survive as a foreigner in a hostile town while facing poverty and starvation. Queen Esther, the most beautiful woman in the nation, submissive and yielding, a hostess of great repute, risked her own life to protect her people, and toppled one of the most powerful figures in government.

Deborah, a woman, wife, and "mother in Israel," was a leader of her people, a settler of disputes, and a model of courage for the other more fearful rulers in times of war. Jael, who showed all the skills of a nurturer and homemaker, also possessed great courage, even a killer instinct when she hammered a peg through the head of her people's enemy. Abigail's caring concern for the welfare of others was made effective by her courage in choosing independently to bring food to David's starving army.

In the New Testament, Mary, the loving, sympathetic sister, reached beyond the vegetables and platters and sat as a student before Jesus to learn theological truths greater than even the rabbis knew. Lydia, a woman with an open home and an open heart, who not only cared for a traveling teacher

but listened to and believed his message, was also a rich and influential businesswoman in her community.

Men, too, have lived beyond stereotypes. The aggressive and powerful leader Moses was like a mother to his wayward charges, even to the point of self-denial. A conquering soldier, David was also a sensitive poet-musician. Elijah, brave defender of the faith, was a most helpless, weak, and timid fugitive utterly dependent on God for his survival.

Noble and uncorrupted scholars and politicians, such as Daniel, have shown great empathy with the plight and sins of the people. The belligerent and warlike sons of Zebedee became loving and gentle disciples and pastors. The self-reliant Peter is known as one of the most trusting followers. The great preacher and battler Paul admitted need and weakness in himself, and by so doing revealed the grace of God at work in his life.

In the life of Jesus we see most clearly the possibilities of the life not bound by stereotypes. He demonstrated all the robust "masculine" qualities of decisiveness, firmness, assertiveness, self-confidence, objectivity, and courage. He appealed to other men and led them with power and purpose. He was physically and mentally aggressive and authoritative. He showed great courage and endurance. But he also portrayed profound sympathy, tenderness, caring and nurturing concern, and gentleness. He was unafraid of His emotions and expressed them publicly. He was trusting, loving, approachable, and winsome. His ministry was enriched with all the finest human virtues.

Throughout human history, the combination of gentleness and strength, yielding and striving, self-reliance and dependence, has contributed to the effectiveness of those who served God in remarkable ways. The point to be made is not that we will all make as notable an impact on the annals of history and the cause of God as these Bible characters, but rather that we need not hesitate to do what we can, with the abilities that we have, in the tasks that lie at our hands. We should not be afraid of challenging the limitations that society may impose on us so that we might live with integrity.



We should not let custom alone define our personalities or our callings.

### **The Psychological Perspective**

Studies in the psychology of gender in the early years of this century focused on gender differences. At first researchers set out to see if and how intelligence scores for men differed from those for women. By the 1920s and 1930s they were looking for emotional and social differences. In the 1950s they turned their attention to gender roles and how these were learned.

Since the 1960s many in the profession have become increasingly uncomfortable with the underlying assumptions of the studies that rationalized and legitimized the present status of women. Today many are willing to acknowledge that there are gender differences, although it is virtually impossible to separate the characteristics that are a result of genetic causes from those that have been learned through socialization. Today, however, a serious challenge is mounted against the very ideal of the intrinsic and unchangeable nature of the differences, particularly as determinants of social, political and economic roles.

### **Trends in Studies on Gender Differences**

The common practice for classifying women and men was to use labels that summed up the characteristics that each gender was presumed to exhibit. It was believed, for instance, that men could be called "agenetic," meaning they exhibited self-protection, self-assertion, and self-expansion. Women, on the other hand, were called "communal," meaning they identified with and even became absorbed into the life of other beings. Another pair of labels in common use was "instrumental," which described men as task-oriented, dominant, and aggressive; and "expressive," which described women as submissive, relational-oriented, and supportive.

Early in the 1970s Anne Constantinople gave studies in gender differences a renewed impetus and a new direction. In an article entitled "Masculinity-Femininity: An Exception to

a Famous Dictum" she raised some very pertinent questions and in the light of these reviewed current measuring instruments and the scales that were being used to determine degrees of "femininity" and "masculinity." Her most significant question was whether, in fact, a bipolar, unidimensional continuum connected masculinity and femininity; i.e., could individuals be legitimately placed somewhere along this continuum, where the majority of men clustered at one end and the majority of women at the other? She wondered if instead "masculine" and "feminine" may indeed be two-dimensional. In effect, she introduced the notion that masculinity and femininity may be independent of each other, and an individual's personality may be composed of characteristics from both scales.<sup>1</sup>

Sandra Bem followed this shortly afterward with a study that was built on this entirely new hypothesis.<sup>2</sup> With the help of 100 judges, both women and men, she developed two lists of qualities that were considered appropriate: one for men and the other for women. The "masculine" items included acting as a leader, being aggressive, ambitious, analytical, assertive, athletic, competitive, defending one's own belief, being dominant, forceful, independent, decisive, self-reliant, self-sufficient, having a strong personality, and being willing to take a stand and to take risks.

The "feminine" items included being affectionate, cheerful, childlike, compassionate, soothing hurt feelings, being flatterable, gentle, gullible, loving children, being loyal, sensitive to others, shy, soft-spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm, and yielding.

With these characteristics statistically arranged and developed as the Bem sex role inventory (BSRI), she tested numbers of subjects to determine how they rated on both "masculine" and "feminine" attributes.

Her findings support the claim that the dimensions of "masculinity" and "femininity" are empirically as well as socially independent. In other words, she discovered men who scored high on the "masculine" qualities and other men who scored low. There were women who scored high on the

“feminine” qualities and others who scored low. But there were also men and women who scored high on both scales, or the opposite scale, or who scored low on both. There was such a wide range of divergence that she introduced a fourfold classification system: high masculine; high feminine; low masculine/low feminine; and high masculine/high feminine. This fourth category, a blending of a high degree of both “masculine” and “feminine” qualities, most readily applies to those people who live beyond gender stereotypes.

These four personality types have been found to hold true across various age and race populations. Furthermore, researchers have been surprised to find that people most often describe themselves in terms that are less rigid than the stereotypes they support. It seems, then, that traditional gender role expectations may have specified how people should act, but they have not been able to determine people’s personalities! There has been a large-scale case of being one thing and saying another.

With the aid of Bem’s sex role inventory and other similar instruments, scores of studies have been undertaken over the past few years to determine the relationship not merely between gender and personality, but also between combined and masculine-feminine scores regardless of gender and a number of personality constructs. Overall it appears that women and men who combine both the “feminine” and “masculine” characteristics in their personalities have distinct advantages in personal adjustment, mental health, satisfaction, success, and coping over strongly gender-typed individuals.

For instance, research suggests that growth toward psychosocial maturity is aided by more flexible gender role functioning.<sup>3</sup> The more that males exhibit sympathy and responsiveness, along with typically “male” traits, and the more that women exhibit objectivity and restlessness, along with the “female” traits, the more likely they are to proceed to the highest levels of development in moral reasoning.<sup>4</sup> The highly “feminine-type” women are also likely to exhibit high levels of anxiety, low self-esteem, and low acceptance by their

peers; they will probably do less well at college.

Women who exhibit both "masculine" and "feminine" traits have more social competence, self-esteem, personal adjustment, achievement motivation, and less mood change and sense of helplessness. Even in those areas where women are thought to excel, such as nurturing, without some of the more "masculine" confidence and daring they will hold back from acting out what they instinctively know to do.

"Masculine-feminine" people fear the results of success significantly less than "feminine" women, and they experience the greatest personal and work satisfaction. "Masculine-feminine" people spread more evenly through the career options and show more acceptance of nontraditional job change and more support for persons in nontraditional jobs. This puts them in positions that could increase their chances for higher pay, status, and opportunity for advancement.

The nature of the task, leadership, style, dogmatism, communication, understanding, and the motivations of the group members are more important considerations in the making of good leaders than is gender; the best characterization of leadership is via psychological rather than biological gender types.

Research also suggests that "masculine-feminine" children use much more flexible—and therefore, more successful—approaches in problem-solving. The highly "masculine-feminine" person, who is characterized as more open to experience, flexible, accepting of apparent opposites, unconcerned about social norms, and self-reliant, seems to resemble the creative person. "Masculine-feminine" mates were preferred by both men and women and were generally more popular.<sup>5</sup>

The studies reviewed so far would suggest that women who want to be well-adjusted, successful, intelligent, creative, well-liked, and psychologically mature should reach out for "masculine" qualities. Conversely, men who want to be more successful leaders, to reach higher developmental states, and have women like them better should adopt some "feminine" characteristics.

While this might suggest a collection of traits is desirable, this is to interpret the data too narrowly. Authentic personal growth involves rising above the simple typing of "masculine" or "feminine" characteristics. It calls for a higher level of integration. It leaves unwarranted and unhelpful labels behind altogether.

### **Recent Support for Living Beyond Gender Stereotypes**

Many psychologists are supporting the notion of a better integrated, more generalized view of human personality. Such a view acknowledges the possibility of genuine and deep-seated gender differences while also allowing the very real possibility that men and women have the potential for a wider spectrum of behavior and personality characteristics than has been permitted by the stereotypes.

Studies in genetics have supported this notion. Of the 23 pairs of chromosomes that determine human makeup, only one half of one pair will make a person a male or a female. In addition, few if any genes are found on the Y chromosome, which determines maleness. In every other respect, females and males receive the same genetic material. It is logical that the chromosomes and genes not directly related to reproduction should be undiffering in both sexes, since both men and women must survive in the same environment. Further, to assert from such small genetic differences such pervasive gender differences, encompassing personality, intelligence, lifestyle, employability, and a host of "masculine" and "feminine" characteristics, seems unreasonable.

Some of the researchers who have worked with the Bem inventory are stepping back from the immediate findings and taking a wider look at what the results suggest. Some, for instance, have begun questioning the simple fourfold division of people according to "masculine" and "feminine" attributes (e.g., Spencer and Helmreich). They see these traits as being part of something larger, even suggesting that instrumental and expressive traits go deeper than gender role orientation.

Bem herself states that if there is a moral to be drawn, it

is that behavior should have no gender. When the prospect of being comfortable with combined trait personalities becomes a reality, the concept of combined traits will itself have been overcome. Certainly gender identity will remain—it is a biological given, and we can accept and be happy with the bodies we have. What disappears are the artificial restraints of gender, so that people are free to live out their own unique blend of temperament and behavior.

A growing number of writers are speaking in terms of maturity and fulfillment that do not even use labels such as “masculine” and “feminine” at all. They propose that fully functioning persons will have a wide range of behaviors at their disposal. These will be various and contrasting but integrated in a synergistic way so that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. Transcendence of gender roles will bring together a greater number of dynamic traits. Individuals can move freely from situation to situation and behave and feel appropriately and adaptively in each. There may be even greater diversity in human personality, but it will depend more on individual temperament than on gender.

### **Practical Perspectives**

What would be gained from embarking on a full-scale program that encourages people to live beyond stereotypes and gender role determinants? What would come about with a renewed commitment to restore the image of God in the fullness of its meaning—taking care of the earth, thinking and doing as individuals, being creative in activity and thought, and relating to others responsibly and mutually?

The complete restoration of the human family to God's intent and good purpose is our promised future, but the redemptive work of God is already in process among us. As we participate in the grace that brings salvation, and as we cooperate with the will of God, the kingdom can become a reality for us as a community of faith now. In sanctified imagination we can envision the life of a fully developed human being.

At the personal level individuals would have a wider

range of behaviors at their disposal. They would be more effective in a greater variety of situations than the stereotypes presently encourage. For women this greater effectiveness could contribute to improved self-esteem, confidence, motivation to succeed, and a sense of self-control and self-determination within their God-given spheres of influence. The "feminine" qualities would be as highly valued as the "masculine" qualities. The complementarity of men's and women's insights and perspectives working together could give rise to a more balanced and more representative decision-making at all levels of human endeavor.

For men it would encourage a greater confidence in situations demanding sensitivity and the expression of emotion. Accomplishment and success would be better understood in the light of values presently underrated, e.g., the values of relationships strengthened, peace fostered, the underprivileged considered, and the natural world preserved.

Mothers would be more successful homemakers. With their warm and nurturing behaviors toward their families, they would combine a wide range of interest in things beyond their own front gate to become better informed and more interesting partners for their husbands and children, more involved in issues that ultimately could preserve and strengthen not only their own homes, but all homes. It is already known that developing outside pursuits can help protect them from some kinds of nervous disorder. Greater assertiveness could inhibit the violent behavior against them and their children that occurs all too frequently in homes and on the streets.

Fathers would be more successful homemakers, too. For some it would mean they would spend more time with their families and share in the tasks of caring for the home and the family members. This could give their children another closely identified and significant role model in the crucial formative years. They would no longer have to live up to tough stereotypes that wear on the nerves and sensitivities. Their ambition, aggressiveness, and competitiveness would be moderated by gentleness and supportiveness.

Both men and women in the work force would live and work more creatively. Jobs traditionally reserved for men or women would be open to any who had the necessary aptitudes and training. Students at all levels of schooling would encounter female and male teachers, and the helping professions would include male and female workers so that the needs of women and men would be met by those who understood them best.

Both men and women would be seen as equally qualified for job advancement, pay increments, and leadership roles, and both would be equally willing to make sacrifices in time, money, and effort for a greater good. The interest of both female and male employees would be represented in policy-making.

The church would find it could draw on a greater supply of talents and abilities than it presently allows itself. People would be chosen for ministry and leadership not on the basis of their gender, but on the basis of their potential contribution. All its members would feel equally valuable, useful, and called. Men would not be so afraid of expressing religious sentiment or women of grappling with theological issues. Both sexes would serve where they were best suited—whether in counseling, comforting, preaching, healing, teaching, managing, publishing, or caring for the needs of others.

In the late twentieth century the world is no longer as simple as it once was. The human family faces challenges, threats, fears, hopes, and changes that no other generation could have even imagined. Our homes, our communities, and our churches can survive only as we look at them openly, reassess them without bias, and bring to their support the best that we have.

Former concerns for maintaining a stable social structure, authoritarian systems of leadership, and prescribed lifestyles by making women “feminine” in the most narrowly defined sense and men “masculine” appear now to have been misguided.

To meet the challenges of the next few decades and the new century, all the resources of humanity will be taxed. Half



the earth's population, the women, cannot afford to leave their fate and destiny in the hands of men alone. They must participate in the world for their own sake and for the good of the rest of humanity. Men must be present in the home and in those places where tender care is to be given if the needs of the young, poor, oppressed, and defenseless are to be met. All God's children need to think, to do, and to be creative as we endeavor to fulfill the divine purpose for our lives.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Anne Constantinople, "Masculinity-Femininity: An Exception to a Famous Dictum," *Psychological Bulletin* (1973): pp. 389-407.

<sup>2</sup> S. L. Bem, "The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 42 (1974): 155-162.

<sup>3</sup> Carol Ann Glazer and Jerome B. Dusek, "The Relationship Between Sex-Role Orientation and Resolution of Erickson Developmental Crisis" *Sex Roles* 13 (1985): 653-61; A. S. Waterman, S. K. Whitbourne, "Androgyny and Psychosocial Development Among College Students and Adults," *Journal of Personality* 50 (June 1982): 121-33.

<sup>4</sup> Jeanne Humphrey Block, "Conception of Sex Role," in *Beyond Sex-Role Stereotypes: Readings Toward a Psychology of Androgyny*, ed. Bean Kaplan (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1976), pp. 63-78.

<sup>5</sup> These conclusions are drawn from a dozen sources and more than a dozen expert conclusions. See especially the journal *Sex Roles* and *The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

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# A Woman's Place



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*A Woman's Place* takes a serious look at the changing relationship between the Adventist Church and its female members from the time of its founding to the present. Are we making progress? How are things changing? How can we help ourselves and each other experience greater fulfillment in our lives and service to God? The authors believe that only as we carefully examine the issues and options regarding the role and status of women can we effect change where change is needed.

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