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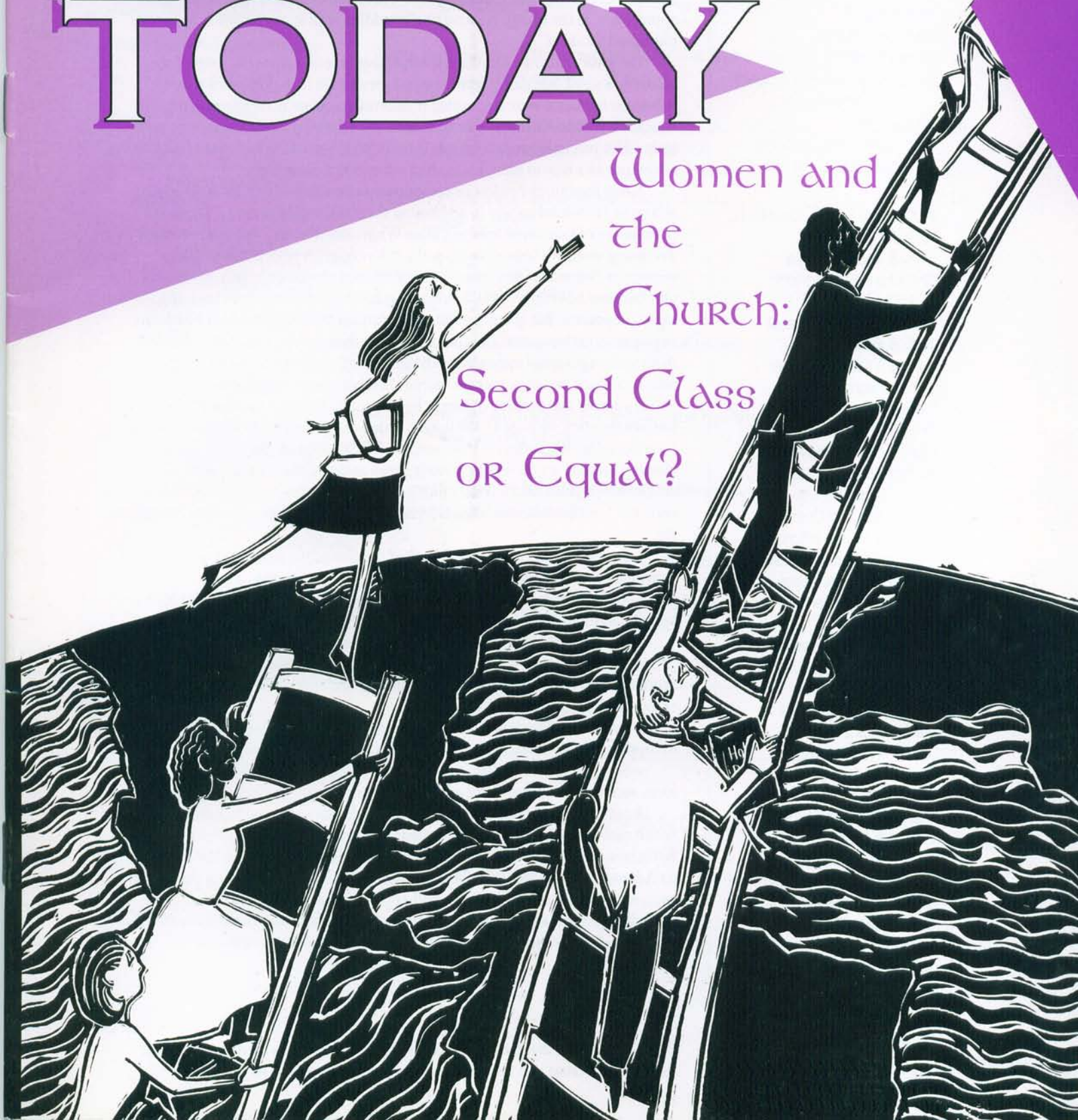
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ADVENTIST TODAY

Women and
the
Church:

Second Class
OR Equal?



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REFORM. IT'S IN THE ADVENTIST BLOOD, OR AT LEAST IT USED TO BE. THIS ISSUE of *Adventist Today* is about reform—past and present. The major focus is on contemporary reform—women's ordination, and we continue to discuss the church's interest in "health reform."

Adventism began as a reform "movement." Until a generation ago the preferred nomenclature was "Advent Movement," connoting a people on the move awaiting Christ's return. Today the term "Adventist denomination" seems more appropriate, as the church is increasingly saddled with its many institutions and routinized thinking.

The great challenge for modern Adventists is to recapture the spirit of the pioneers, a spirit that didn't fear to be counter-culture in making society better. Adventist forebears were committed to reforming society in its dress, health and education. Joshua V. Himes, a Boston cleric, joined the adventist movement in the early 1840s precisely because he was committed to reforming society and he saw adventism as a way to bring his leading reforms to a culmination.

Today the church has lost its commitment to cutting-edge reform. At least it is lagging far behind society in addressing the moral evil of sexism. Despite the prominence of founder-prophetess Ellen White, and despite a hundred years of discussing women's importance (see the chronology on page 5), the ordained ministry is "for males only." Surely, the ordination of women is only a matter of time because Adventism, unlike Roman Catholicism, does not have basic theological objections. But given the church's reformist tradition, it should be leading, not lagging, in this crucial area. Not only is the church deprived of the talents of thousands of potential ministerial candidates, its 5 million women members are sent an implicit message: you are second class because of your gender.

It appears that the church hierarchy's attention finally is focused on this issue (see the story on page 4). We'll see whether any positive action on ordination is forthcoming. Regardless of the wrong of denying women the church's official blessing, women are increasingly joining men in doing the church's work. Guest editor Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, a minister in the Southeastern California Conference, put together this issue's focus section on women in ministry and in church life:

—Susan Thompson-Jacobsen explains the distinctive worship services of a women-directed church.

—Robert Kennedy, an East Coast theologian, compares the church's battle against racism to its struggle with sexism.

—Sali Jo Hand reflects on her fulfilling life as a solo pastor in Arizona.

—Three husbands of women in ministry, led by Michael McMillan, talk about the challenges faced by men who are married to women pioneering in church leadership.

—Kris Coffin Stevenson describes the diverse organizations that have arisen to support Adventist women.

—Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, as a woman theologian, fittingly concludes the focus section with an insightful essay on ecofeminism.

Again, we run articles highlighting the challenge presented to Adventist health care by the nation's changing medical economics. Hospital president Jim Boyle lays out some of the issues that absorbed hundreds attending the seminar on Adventist health care, February 19, in Loma Linda. A full report on the conference, organized by *Adventist Today*, will appear in a later issue. And finally, Ray Cottrell reports on a recent chain of events at Hinsdale Hospital in Illinois that raises questions of due process, community trust, and non-disclosure of information.

—Jim Walters

ADVENTIST TODAY

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Southeastern California Postpones Ordination of Women

4

SOUTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE'S EXECUTIVE committee voted 16-9 at its January meeting to postpone the ordination of women in Southeastern. The committee thus voted in favor of conference president Lynn Mallery's recommendation "to give the world church's elected leaders the opportunity to provide the leadership for this vital issue."

This January vote, however, was contrary to the conference's Gender Inclusiveness Commission (GIC) recommendation, which requested positive action on a 1992 constituency order for "conference leaders to devise a plan by which qualified women ministers whom we employ be ordained for ministry within our jurisdiction of the World Church."

The importance of the 16-9 vote is illuminated by the context in which the executive committee meeting took place:

—The November executive committee meeting tied at 11-11 on implementing the constituency's ordination vote; the 16-9 vote took place at a meeting devoted solely to the ordination issue.

—Mallery met with the GIC at its December meeting and agreed to work with the Commission in getting its recommendation through the executive committee.

—Mallery met a few days prior to the meeting with three women ordination candidates and instructed them to have their photographs taken for the ordination booklet if the executive committee gave the go-ahead.

—Mallery spoke on January 11 to General Conference president Robert Folkenberg, who urged a delay.

—After receiving a phone call from his wife, Mallery reported that during the meeting a brick had been hurled through the window of his car, parked at his home. A week earlier a similar incident had occurred, after which Mallery found a note in his front seat that read: "The Bible says no lady ministers." Punctured tires and gas cap tampering have also been a problem.

At the January 13 meeting, GIC spokespersons emphasized that the immediate implementation of a special non-discriminatory ordination within the conference would be an act of "conscientious obedience" to God's current leading, not "ecclesiastical insubordination." They stated that although the denomination does not ordain women for world duty, Southeastern is not precluded from a special ordination for local service only.

No one present at the meeting, including division and union leadership, defended the morality or the theological correctness of the present sexist ban on ordaining women. One committee person labeled the present position as disobedient to God and sinful.

The primary objection was the claim that Southeastern would be stepping out of line from the denomination. Proponents indicated that the "special" ordination was supplementary and not contrary to denominational policy. Opponents replied that the world church would not interpret the conference action thus.

David VanDenburgh, committee member and senior church pastor, said during the discussion that Southeastern could move ahead on ordination and win the battle but lose the war. Although this point was criticized, the most plausible scenario for its truth was portrayed by Gary Patterson of the North American Division (NAD): If the executive committee went ahead with ordaining women, a special constituency of the conference could be called to see if the delegates would agree with the conference leadership's actions. Patterson speculated that even those delegates favoring women's ordination might vote in disapproval of the path taken by conference leadership. If the results of the vote were negative, it would be "a great setback for the GC going forward. People would say, 'Even the wild and crazy ones in Southeastern California reversed themselves on this issue.'"

Actions in Southeastern and in other Adventist organizations appear to have gained the hierarchy's attention (see "As We Go To Press," *Adventist Today*, July/August, 1993). In recent conversations, Folkenberg assured Mallery that the issue will be taken to the 1994 year-end meeting of the NAD prior to the General Conference's fall Annual Council. This will allow the NAD to vote a positive recommendation on women's ordination to the Council, before the Council discusses the recommendation. Folkenberg has broached the topic to world division presidents, and is expected to lay further groundwork before the Council meeting. Although several divisions of the world church are not in favor of women's ordination, division presidents might be willing to yield to a NAD request for leniency on women's ordination because they desire certain favors from the NAD.

Even if the Council should vote that the issue of ordaining women could be decided on a division-by-division basis—and this is the likely form of a positive action—the NAD would probably not feel free to act until this is voted by a General Conference Session. The 1995 GC session in Utrecht would have a higher-than-usual percentage of Adventist delegates from the developing world, an area that doesn't see women's equality as a priority issue.

Mallery's recommendation to his executive committee included a second part: that the committee "reconsider the issue (of ordaining women) at our November 1994 meeting to determine Southeastern's future course of action should the General Conference president be unsuccessful in his attempts to bring consensus." And so, once again, Adventist women in ministry are waiting.

—The editors

A Historical Outline: Adventists and the Ordination of Women

Compiled by Kit Watts
Edited and updated by Cherie Rouse

5

1878 FIRST LICENSING OF A SEVENTH-DAY Adventist woman minister—E. S. Lane.

1879 James White article in *Review and Herald* defends participation of women in preaching ministry.

1881 Motion to ordain women to gospel ministry is made at General Conference session; the item is referred to the General Conference Committee.

1884 Six women are recognized as licensed ministers.

1884 Ellen G. White receives ordination credentials from the General Conference.

1885 In *Review and Herald*, Ellen G. White calls for ordination service for women.

1897 Helen Williams and Lulu Wightman receive ministerial licenses. Later, Wightman is referred to as an ordained minister.

1898 General Conference committee issues ministerial license to Mrs. S.M.I. Henry.

1900 In Sydney, Australia, W. C. White participates in an ordination service that includes deaconesses.

1933-35 Maybelle Vandermark [Goransson] serves as sole pastor of a Virginia district.

1949 First sponsorship of woman to seminary—Lucile Harper [Knapp], by North Pacific Union.

1964 Woman Bible scholar completes Ph.D.—Leona G. Running, in Semitic languages, Johns Hopkins University. She teaches at SDA Theological Seminary.

1972 First ordination of woman as local elder—Josephine Benton, in Washington, D.C., by W. B. Quigley, conference president, and Cree Sandefur, union president.

1973 Women join pastoral staffs. In Takoma Park, Maryland, Kit Watts as minister of publications and Josephine Benton as associate minister. In Loma Linda, Margaret Hempe as minister.

1973 Margarete Prange's success as a pastor in Germany prompts calls to ordain her as an elder.

1973 The Camp Mohaven conference convenes to discuss 29 papers on the role of women in the church. Participants recommend women be ordained as local church elders and those with theological training be hired as "associates in pastoral care."

1973 Annual Council votes to "receive" the Camp Mohaven report and to continue to study election of women to local church offices requiring ordination.

1975 Spring Meeting approves ordination of women as deaconesses, and as elders only "with greatest discretion and caution." Women may become assistant pastors but with missionary licenses, not ministerial licenses or certificates.

1975 Biblical Research Institute prepares 13 scholarly papers based on Camp Mohaven, but is forbidden to release them to church members.

1979-82 Josephine Benton becomes sole pastor of a church in Rockville, Maryland.

1982 First sponsorship of women pastors to seminary: Becky Lacy and Collette Crowell, by Southeastern California and Upper Columbia conferences, respectively.

1982 Association of Adventist Women is founded and holds first North American conference.

1984 Potomac Conference Committee permits three women to baptize—Jan Daffern, Francis Wiggins, and Marsha Frost. The General Conference reprimands Potomac for defiance and orders it to rescind permission to baptize.

1985 The first Commission on the Role of Women in the Church (50 men and 15 women) decides against definitive decision on women's ordination.

1985 Autumn Council rejects North American Division recommendation that women pastors with seminary training should perform weddings and baptize, as do men pastors with seminary training.

1986 *Adventist Review* reveals that W. C. White ordained deaconesses in Australia. This is contrary to 1985 General Conference objections to ordaining deaconesses.

- 1986 Southeastern California Conference votes to treat unordained men and women equally in giving permission to baptize.
- 1986 Women pastors resume baptizing in North American Division. Margaret Hempe baptizes two candidates in University Church, Loma Linda, at the request of pastoral staff and more than 100 members of church board.
- 1987 Of Adventist religion teachers throughout the world, 69 percent believe women should be ordained as gospel ministers, according to study reported in *Ministry* magazine.
- 1990 General Conference session votes to authorize all unordained, licensed ministers, male and female alike, to baptize and perform marriages.
- 1990 Because the last 10 years saw church presses forbidden to publish on women's ordination, two books are published by alternative means: *Called by God*, by Josephine Benton, and *Women, Church, God: A Socio-Biblical Study*, by Caleb Rosado.
- 1990 Southeastern California Conference constituents vote to promote participation and ordination of women in ministry and ask for progress report at 1992 constituency meeting.

In 1881 the motion to ordain women to gospel ministry is made at General Conference session; the item is referred to General Conference Committee. In 1990, 109 years later, the GC session votes not to ordain women at this time.

- 1988 Gender Inclusiveness Task Force (Commission) formed by Southeastern California Conference constituents.
- 1988 Adventist Women's Institute forms to pursue full and equal participation of women in the church. First chairperson is Fay Blix.
- 1988 A second Commission on the Role of Women in the Church (61 men and 19 women) recommends further study before a decision on ordaining women.
- 1988 TEAM—Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry—is founded to work toward equality in ordination to the gospel ministry. Pat Habada is first chairperson.
- 1988 Study by Andrews University finds nearly 1,000 women elders serving in North America.
- 1988 Reports tell of Mrs. Cho Kuik-Nan, who attracts 1,000 to Sabbath services and who has baptized at least 200 persons in Wuxi, China.
- 1989 Pacific Union Conference urges General Conference to "eliminate gender as a consideration for ordination to the gospel ministry."
- 1989 Third Commission on the Role of Women (including 17 women) meets and recommends that women pastors, as authorized by their divisions, may baptize and perform weddings but may not be ordained. Inter-America, South America, and Eastern Africa decline to send women representatives.
- 1990 General Conference session delegates vote not to authorize ordination for women pastors by 1,173 to 377.
- 1992 Southeastern California Conference constituents ask executive committee to devise plan for ordaining women in its jurisdiction and to conduct all future ordinations of both men and women uniformly.
- 1993 At January meeting, ministerial directors of North America, with senior pastors of college churches, vote 88% that the North American Division should authorize and promote ordination of women pastors on a regional basis.
- 1993 Pacific Union asks North American Division to consider the ordination issue at its October year-end meeting. Accordingly, officials vote to place matter on agenda.
- 1993 Delegates to year-end meeting find women's ordination has been removed from agenda at the request of General Conference president Robert Folkenberg, who thinks it wiser to get a positive vote closer to the time of the 1994 Annual Council.
- 1993 In communication with Southeastern California Conference leaders, Folkenberg affirms his personal support for ordination of women and expresses hope of gaining agreement among division presidents that divisions may set their own ordination policies.
- 1994 Southeastern California executive committee vote 16 to 9 to postpone ordaining women in its region, to "give the world church's elected leaders the opportunity to provide the leadership for this vital issue."
- 1994 Southeastern California Conference leaders vote to reconsider ordination of women in Southeastern at their November 1994 meeting and determine a course of action should Folkenberg not get consensus at Annual Council.

Now, 116 years later, the call of God in the life of an Adventist woman still remains officially unrecognized by the corporate church structure. 🙏

Women-Church: Affirming the Religious Experience of Women

by Susan Thompson-Jacobsen

7

WOMEN-CHURCH IS THE COMMUNITY THAT DEVELOPS around women's spiritual needs, which are generally not met in traditional church practice. Such a community gives support to women as they examine their spiritual experience, develop their spiritual gifts and collaborate in constructing theologies and practices which make possible a living worship experience.

Following the 1990 General Conference Session, many women were distressed to see church leaders failing to respond to the concerns of Adventist women. There was a need to come together and grieve this experience as well as explore ways of continuing to support women. It was also apparent that while some churches had women on pastoral staffs, these women did not have consistent opportunities to preach. Out of these concerns, the first Adventist women-church was born in Washington, D.C., in February, 1991: Mary's Place—Worship and the Word Through Women's Eyes. About 18 months later several women began meeting in southern California to address similar needs. Away from painful encounters with church politics, women, and men who support them, have had the opportunity to experiment with ideas and forms which will bring them spiritual blessing. In our southern California meetings at La Sierra University, we have emphasized three important ideas in our planning and services.

Diversity. First, we affirm the many differing points of view which women bring to religion. We recognize that age, race and culture each contribute to our perspectives. Perhaps more significant is our understanding that the social construction of what it means to be female or male has an important influence on our religious life.

The domination of traditional theology and worship by privileged males has fostered an unbalanced perspective on meaningful ideas and practices in religion. Various ethnic groups, women, and the poor are usually marginalized in both planning and participation. Further, many of the tasks which culture assigns to women are not valued. This devaluation negates the various perspectives which women can bring to the worshipping community. The resulting exclusion has a deplorable effect on the self-worth of many

women as they seek connection with God and with their religious community.

In planning worship, our group seeks ways to affirm women in their assumed roles and tasks. In one service we took as our theme the ministries of biblical foremothers and the ways we, as their spiritual descendents, follow their models today. The stories of these women were written by Ginger Hanks-Harwood and read aloud by various participants. The prophetic gifts of Mary, who anointed Jesus, Tamar, who obtained justice, and Abigail, the peacemaker, are some of the figures we worked with. Dorcas, who portrayed Christ to her community, is the spiritual forebear of the many women who minister to the most basic human needs. The dignity of clothing and food are essential to the empowerment of the human spirit, and women are active daily in this ministry. As a part of describing this ministry, we recited Carter Heyward's litany "Blessing the Bread," a powerful affirmation of this divinely blessed work. Then we broke bread and served each other, acknowledging the way we participate in God's work in our feeding and care of each other.

Context. The second important idea in our worship planning is reclaiming the biblical text for women. Scripture's prophetic tradition and stories which affirm women's participation in religious history are often neglected or unknown. Also, some Christians pay little attention to the cultural and historical factors which mark each writer's perspective. The Bible is a unique document in that various traditions critique or balance each other while telling the story of how Hebrews and Christians came to understand God. Thus we see the story of Ruth, foreigner and ancestress of Jesus, told in opposition to Ezra's about marriages between Jews and non-Jews. We find that Paul accepts many of the cultural restrictions on women, but names them as apostles, prophets and leaders of the church.

A feminist hermeneutic calls readers to examine the bias with which they approach scripture. Stories which appear to assign lesser status to women or tell of their victimization are seen to describe what sin does to relationships, not prescribe women's status. Scripture calls its readers to judge a character's adherence to God's moral principles by his or her treatment of women, as well as other marginalized groups—the alien, the poor, or children. For example, when the story of David and Bathsheba is told, the focus is often on David's sin and his relationship with God. Bathsheba is often ignored, or worse, blamed for seductiveness. Our women-church treatment of this story, as written by Ginger Hanks-Harwood, focused instead on Bathsheba's horrifying helplessness, her intense grief at the loss of her

By Susan Thompson-Jacobsen in consultation with Pam Dietrich, Alice Drury, Ginger Hanks-Harwood, Carol Haviland, Sandra Hodge, Lorene Jabola, Pat Jones, Charlotte Lewis, Penny Miller, Cherie Rouse, Maryan Stirling, Marta Teel and Kit Watts. Thompson-Jacobsen is a homemaker and also a graduate student in theology at La Sierra University.

child, and the power this grief brought to her insistence that David make right her wretched situation. When the story is read in this way, the reader's focus is changed, making new insights possible. Reclaiming the text in these ways gives scriptural authority to the personal power women can claim, and to their leadership and ministry.

Liturgy. Our third emphasis has been to present symbols, liturgies and ceremonies which honor our love of beauty and our understanding of the wholeness and the varied dimensions of spiritual life. Planning our own worship services means we can find creative ways to do this. We can experiment with the various ways that scripture and tradition image God, instead of depending on a single model. Using inclusive language is a vital part of alerting ourselves to the infinite ways in which the Divine and Holy One interacts with us. And it draws the awareness of both men and women to the ways in which we unthinkingly limit God.

We believe that worship is an experience of the entire person. Each of the senses which God has given us is a pathway of learning and a way to experience spiritual growth. Worship can be primarily a passive, listening experience. We pay close attention to the ways we can be brought to a visual awareness of ideas through beauty and symbolic objects and arrangements. We remember that scent has long been a part of worship preparation and experience, and that touch and taste can be ways of expressing holiness. Utilizing the body in these various ways enhances kinetic learning and affirms that spirit, mind and body are not separate elements, but are integrated wholly in worshipping God.

In many ways, last December's service exemplified the ways such planning develops. We usually work without someone in charge. Each person volunteers to work on an aspect, and we have confidence in the collaborative process. This service validated that confidence as we worked to challenge each worshipper to think in new ways about Mary and her role in the Christmas story and the ways we and

others live out her prophetic vision. Our theme was "Giving Birth to Hope in the World."

We listened to seasonal music on the harp and hammered dulcimer. Some of those attending were invited to read a litany and a poem. Worshipers were asked to list what experiences, during the past year, had stolen hope from them. As these were read, candles were extinguished. A short homily was read which explored the scriptural significance of Mary's experience as she prepared for and gave birth to Jesus, the light of hope in the world. Finally we named what people, events or ideas bring us hope, and we relit the candles to symbolize the light that hope brings into our lives. Among many beautiful decorations of fabric, scent, pictures and fir branches, we had prepared three tables. On one were many objects used to celebrate the birth of a new baby; one held a creche to signify the birth Christians hold most dear, and one was overflowing with objects which symbolize the gifts we as women bring to life as thinkers and nurturers blessing the world with our own visions: paints, books, stethoscope, apron, typewriter, calculator, etc.

Women-church is a continually constructed experience. It is not static, but courts surprise to awaken spiritual growth. It is worship *experience*, not *performance*. Each meeting of our group attests the priestly and prophetic gifts women bring to religious life. Concurrently we are made aware of the loss of these gifts to the larger Adventist community where the involvement of women is not welcome. Christians, as part of spiritual development, have a responsibility to examine their corporate worship lives and to understand and affirm their own particular needs and those of their communities. We also must think in visionary ways about how to bring about the fulfillment of these needs in creating dynamic and nurturing services. Women-church is a natural endeavor of Christian feminists today as they examine needs that have not been met in traditional worship forms and ideas. It is also faithful to the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of present truth and the explorations which discover this. ☪

A Women-Church Sampler

*...We, the sisters of God, say
today,
All shall eat of the bread,
And the power.
We say today
All shall have power
And bread.
Today we say,
Let there be bread.*

*And let there be power!
Let us eat of the bread and the
power!
And all will be filled
For the bread is rising!
By the power of God
Women are blessed
By the women of God
The bread is blessed*

*By the bread of God
The power is blessed
By the power of bread
The power of women
The power of God
The people are blessed
The earth is blessed
And the bread is rising.*

—Excerpt from "Blessing the Bread-A Litany,"
by Carter Heyward

Gender and Race in the Church

by Robert Kennedy

IN *BLACK ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION* (JANUARY 2, 1992), Bernice Sandler is quoted as saying that her understanding of women's issues has helped her to understand racism. She believes that women like Shirley Chisholm, the former New York congresswoman and the first woman, black or white, to run for president, have always understood the intersection of race and gender. My awareness of the interconnections between race and gender has grown over the last decade and a half, but has become especially profound in the last two years since I began to teach a religion class called "God and Gender." I cannot pretend full understanding of all the nuances of the issues, for they are deep and complicated. But for me, a black male who has spent many years working in human relations and multicultural issues, the intersections have clarified themselves in increments.

I admit that at one time my perceptions were limited. As Mercer and others have pointed out, the same is true for some in the women's movement, for they see gender but forget the issues of race. Similarly, some black women argue that white women too often forget the issues on the black women's agenda.

My interest in the agitation of women for greater recognition and for ordination by the church has therefore been keen because I see that many persons are still living at my former level of naiveté. Simply because some of us are comfortable, we care little about those who are meeting injustices. So I have to ask how we, who care so much about personhood, can do so very little for those who face the suffering and pain of exclusion. Why does it seem that we are not doing much to show ourselves as different from the public order, where the ethic is the survival of the "fittest"?

Two years ago I was asked to make a presentation at a church professional meeting on what it means to be a black theologian in my church. On that occasion, a woman was

asked to state what it means to be a woman pastor/theologian in the church. At that same time a homosexual was asked to state what it means to be homosexual in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I was quite challenged to think that race and gender might be considered in the same program with sexual orientation. The lessons learned were quite profound. I sensed more deeply the interconnections between prejudice and discrimination.

When our presentations were over, one of my male ministerial colleagues said to me, "Well, I can understand what you were saying about prejudice and discrimination, but I can't understand what that lady was talking about. She, for one, has enjoyed every privilege I have, except ordination, and yet she is making so much noise." At that point I felt a terrible burden as I explained to him that she made much sense. We should fight not only because of self-interest but because others are suffering. Where prejudice and discrimination exist Christians need to find a common cause.

The resistance, both subtle and explicit, encountered by women wanting equal participation in the life of the church concerns me as a matter of love and justice, but I sense it too, as a part of the struggling minority. Just as blacks and

some other minorities continue to call for regional conferences wherever they become terribly frustrated at a system in which they feel disenfranchised, women will continue to fight for recognition and ordination within the church. If women do not get recognition, they too will draw back from their vibrant sharing in the church. A difference exists between the call for racial equality and the call for gender equality in the church. While some black folk can speak of forming their own conferences, women have never suggested such a possibility. Such a suggestion should be frightening for the few men that would be left behind. That women have not sought their own conferences is no reason for us to be comfortable with the status quo. We must strive for equality and freedom together.

While the leadership role of women and the acceptance of blacks as equals are difficult issues to resolve, the future of our church, especially in North America, demands resolution. If the love and justice of God do not prevail over our prejudice and discrimination, then we are thwarting our members' spiritual gifts, talents and potentials. ☪

While some black folk can speak of forming their own conferences, women have never suggested such a possibility. Such a suggestion should be frightening for the few men that would be left behind. We must strive for equality and freedom together.

Robert Kennedy teaches religion at Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Ministry Fits for a Single Mom, Too

by Sali Jo Hand

10

WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG I NOTICED THAT MOST PEOPLE spend their best years employed in occupations they don't like, eagerly looking forward to retirement. I decided my life would be different. I wanted to live each day to the fullest. I knew that whatever job I chose, it would fill my life with joy and purpose, beyond passing time and paying bills until retirement.

I struggled intensely through my formative years, trying on careers like clothes in stores, but nothing fit. Who was I? What could I do that would give me both pleasure and a sense of fulfillment in life?

I discovered the perfect fit when I accepted Christ as Lord of my life. I was 20 years old. Ministry, sharing my love for God with others, fit perfectly.

I entered Union College in 1985 as an art-theology major and single mother of three rambunctious, energetic boys. My goal was a career in ministry as a Bible worker. I graduated in 1987 hoping to find a position as an associate pastor. This fit. The thought of *me* being a senior pastor was frightening, but I could handle ministry as an associate pastor.

Herman Bauman, president of the Arizona Conference, called me to ministry when I graduated from seminary. I was educated, but I had no idea how to be a pastor, much less a *woman* pastor. I had no role models. "Pastor" before my name sounded so foreign. Still, I was a pastor. I had to learn to wear this robe with dignity and sensitivity.

For three years I followed the lead of my senior pastor, learning what real life pastoral ministry was all about. Just when I began to feel comfortable being an associate pastor, my conference president decided I needed a new challenge. I still felt unprepared to be a senior pastor, but Herman's confidence and support of me seemed boundless. I began pastoring two churches in Arizona "on my own" for the first time. This fit better than anything I'd tried before!

I love being a senior pastor! I like the sense of responsibility before God for my churches plus the freedom to dream, plan and implement my ideas of how a church should function as a vibrant body of Christ. I enjoy working with my elders, board and members. We each want to portray a clear, accurate picture of God in our community. Praying and planning worships with my worship commit-

tee is a special joy. I know I am helpless and dependent on God every time I try to prepare a sermon that will be spiritually relevant to 40-60 people ages 2-92, but I also know God provides and stands by my side in the pulpit again and again. My effectiveness as a pastor is in proportion to the time I spend alone with God, so I find it a special privilege to take the luxury of praying for hours as a part of my job.

I visit with people, comforting when death invades and laughing with them when prayers are wonderfully answered. At weddings and baptisms, I savor the shared joy. I love studying the Bible with people and watching wonder, gratitude and peace shining through the tears of a person who accepts the gift of eternal life for the first time.

As a pastor, I know my life counts for something, especially when someone calls me to say, "Thank you for planning that camp-out. That was the most wonderful thing I've done since I became an Adventist." I also like the sense of uniqueness that I have in being not just a pastor, but a *woman* pastor. I enjoy representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in my community at the ministerial association and participating in ecumenical services with other pastors.

I love working with young people, doing mission trips, camp-meeting, and worships. After one mission trip, a woman academy student confided in me, "I always wanted to be a pastor, but I thought that in our church only men could be pastors. You're the first woman pastor I've ever heard of. If you can do this, maybe I can do it too!"

However, it's hard to live with the responsibility of a job that's never done. The faces of people needing a pastoral visit haunt me. The yet-unwritten sermons stand before me like ominous mountains. The needs of people continually cry out to me for help. My personal resources are never enough.

Loneliness is my worst enemy. Men pastors seem to have a camaraderie which I often feel excluded from. I notice this particularly at workers' meetings where I fit with neither the men pastors nor the wives. In my congregation, I am pastor to many, but friend to only a few. Unfortunately, many church members do not feel that there should be close friendships between the pastor and members. And, like other pastors, I find that the pastoral role conflicts with parental responsibility. Every evening I must choose between spending time with my son and visiting church members who need a pastoral call.

Every challenge in ministry calls me to come closer to God. I keep finding God's love a comforting constant in my life. When my resources run out, God's have only begun to be tapped. Pastoral ministry continually challenges me to be my best, and to find my best in the One who loved me enough to die for me. For my life, this is a perfect fit! 🙏

Sali Jo Hand is the first and only woman pastor in Arizona, where she lives with her youngest son, age 13.



Married to Pioneers: Conversations with Husbands of Adventist Women in Religious Leadership

by Michael McMillan with David Harwood and Wayne Jacobsen

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IN THE MID 1980s, I WAS A SENIOR THEOLOGY MAJOR. Springtime meant two things to senior theology majors. First in our minds were the rapidly approaching interviews with conference officials from our union. The second thing on our minds was integrally related to the first. It was a well known fact that the married students had a distinct advantage at getting a call. For those of us who were not married, it seemed that our romantic interests were as important to nurture as our studies. I was fortunate enough to have a steady relationship with the most incredible woman I had ever met. Feeling secure about the second concern, I worried only about the interviews. Little did I know how important my romantic involvement would be to my success.

On the day of the interviews, I dressed in my best and only suit, and arrived at my first interview two minutes early. I was invited into the room and asked to take a seat. After briefly glancing at my dossier, the conference president looked at me squarely. "Michael," he questioned me, "I see you are not married; tell me, are you dating anyone?"

This was the one question I was sure would come. I was prepared, and glad for the opportunity to exhibit poise despite my sweaty palms and adrenaline-bathed nerves, I started in. "Yes, I am." Then I remembered all the theology majors' jokes about looking for someone who played the piano and enjoyed work with felts, the important things to look for in a wife who could be an asset to a minister. I thought I'd impress them with my sweetheart's interests and abilities in church affairs: "She's a junior, majoring in theology."

The administrators' faces turned to stone. Then slowly the conference president began a lecture about women and the church. He told me that I ought to reconsider dating someone who was so divisive to the church. He told me that it was a grave mistake that some colleges had made in al-

lowing women to take theology. I sat back and waited for my next question. It never came. I was marked as the potential husband of a pioneer.

Fortunately, in the past nine years some things have changed. First, I am married to that most incredible woman. Second, in the conference that this president once represented, a woman serves as the pastor of a two-church district.

This story illustrates how important the families of those in religious leadership are to the institutional church. The denominational leadership has long maintained an interest in the nurturing of the pastor's wife. Shepherdess International, an organization sponsored by the General Conference, is dedicated to this aim. *Ministry* magazine includes a monthly column devoted to the role of the pastor's wife. Yet even as more women are entering leadership roles within the church, little if any effort on the denominational or local level has been made to reach out in support of their families.

The American family has undergone significant change during the last part of this century. Most women work outside the home, many out of a desire to use their gifts to make a contribution to society. Also among these numbers are those affected by economic pressures on more traditional families, and the rise of non-traditional and single-parent families. The families of men and women in Adventist leadership have not been exempt from these changes. The stereotypical role of the pastor's wife has all but disappeared. Yet spouses, male and female, of those in leadership still have unique needs for care within the church.

Husbands of women in church leadership are quite diverse. Most are pursuing professional careers such as medicine, education, church leadership and other similar occupations, and they are often leaders in their professions, communities and churches. Not surprisingly, these men are proud of their wives' accomplishments. Often they have been involved in their wives' decisions to study theology and pursue a career in a particular aspect of church leadership. I interviewed Wayne Jacobsen and David Harwood, two other spouses of pioneers. David recalls the decision like this:

We went to Andrews University where I studied in the M.Div. program. While we were there my wife's interest in studying theology became most recognizable. She
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Michael McMillan is an associate pastor of the Riverside, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church. His wife, Sheryl Prinz-McMillan, is a pastor in the Southeastern California Conference. David Harwood is a sociologist who provides group therapy for people with schizophrenia. His wife, Ginger Hanks-Harwood, is a theologian who has taught in denominational schools at both secondary and collegiate levels. Wayne Jacobsen is professor of anesthesiology and critical care at Loma Linda University Medical Center. Wayne's wife, Susan Thompson-Jacobsen, studies theology and has been involved in church leadership through service on conference committees.

Women's Groups Cover Wide Range of Issues

by Kris Coffin Stevenson

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IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, THE NUMBER OF GROUPS DEDICATED to Adventist women and their issues has grown dramatically. Since equality for different races, nationalities and sexes has become an issue on the American scene, this trend has also been felt in the church. Within religious cultures, more emphasis has been placed on women, both in formal ministry and in lay ministry, and new approaches have been taken in meeting the needs of women, recognizing their strengths and empowering them for greater service.

The concerns and needs of Adventist women differ widely, as do the aims of groups formed to address those needs, ranging from basic Christian nurturing of lay women to militant advocacy for women's ordination. But each group recognizes that women are an eager, active, and viable element in the Adventist church.

Below I describe some of the women's organizations operating in Adventism.

Association of Adventist Women

The Association of Adventist Women (AAW) is the "mother" organization. From it other organizations have sprung or have been supported. AAW began in 1982 with a national conference, followed by 11 national conferences since then, along with one international conference. The AAW mission as summed up by president Elisabeth Wear is "to encourage better support, communication, and understanding among women in the Adventist Church. AAW also seeks to help the church better understand and support the women in the church."

AAW does this through five major activities: First, a newsletter, *The Adventist Woman*, mailed to regular subscribers plus denominational officers who would benefit from regular communication on women's issues. Second, AAW holds annual conferences which include seminars on topics such as spiritual enrichment, professional development and homemaking. Conference time is also given for other women's groups to meet, recruit, and report on their activities.

At the national conference, the Adventist Woman of the Year is honored. Nominees in several areas are selected, including church life, professional work, and home/community. Wear says that next to the newsletter, the Woman of the Year awards do "more to acquaint the church with the gifts of women than any other project attempted."

AAW also supports other Adventist women's groups, giving them visibility—at their national conferences—and most recently in an issue of *The Adventist Woman* (November/December, 1993) which gave an overview of the major organizations.

AAW encourages a variety of projects, such as an effort to support women in ministry and those training to be ministers, and Women and Men Against Sexual Harrassment (WASH).

To appeal to a large audience, AAW steers a fairly mainline course. Although AAW supports women in formal ministry, leaders have not made that a major issue, in order not to alienate any of the membership.

Women and Men Against Sexual Harrassment and Other Abuses (WASH)

WASH began as a taskforce set up in 1992 at the AAW national conference to address the issue of sexual abuse and sexual harrassment in the Adventist denomination. The goal of WASH is to take away the secrecy that presently surrounds incidents of sexual harrassment, so that the abuse can be dealt with correctly.

WASH has compiled a list of books, videos, and tapes and also a list of other resources and organizations for victims. It has been working closely with church officers and with organizations such as the North American Division Commission on Sexual Misconduct. WASH also networks with other entities in the Adventist church which are addressing these issues, such as the Columbia Union, which is presently developing a policy on sexual abuse and harrassment that may become a model for division-wide policy.

Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry (TEAM)

TEAM is "a private organization supporting the ordination of candidates to pastoral ministry regardless of race, social class or gender." TEAM chair, Patricia Habada, describes TEAM's purpose: to "promote equality in Adventist ministry, including but not limited exclusively to women's ordination." First organized in August 1988, TEAM seeks not only to promote women's ordination but to actively support women in formal ministry.

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TEAM communicates through union papers, women's group newsletters, personal letters, and a souvenir video taken of the Celebration of Equality conference held at Sligo Church in October of 1989.

TEAM members have published and widely circulated a pamphlet, *The Biblical Basis For Ordaining Women*. TEAM actively communicates on the issue of equality in ministry with the church structure, involving itself in meetings with representatives from the North American Division and with General Conference president Robert Folkenberg, among others.

In 1991 TEAM established a Women in Ministry Scholarship Fund to assist women desiring a future in pastoral or chaplain ministries. So far, seven \$1,000 scholarships have been awarded.

TEAM has promoted the book *Called by God* by Josephine Benton, an historical account of the first women in Adventist ministry and circulated the results of a comprehensive survey, *Keeping Hope Alive*, taken on the attitudes of women in ministry after the 1990 Indianapolis decision not to ordain them. TEAM publishes a newsletter called *Teamwork*.

Adventist Women's Coalition

Adventist Women's Coalition (AWC) was formed in 1990 to help pool the resources of different women's groups and enable them to accomplish mutual goals. The Coalition resulted from action taken at a special weekend retreat held in Pennsylvania for representatives of the Adventist Women's Institute, the Southeastern California Conference Gender Inclusiveness Commission, TEAM and AAW.

Presently, AWC's membership includes AAW, TEAM, the Bible Instructor's Guild (BIG), and Mary's Place, as well as individual members. The Adventist Women's Institute (AWI) elected not to join.

The AWC's major goal is equal opportunities for employment within the Adventist Church, including women's ordination. The AWC has a harmonious relationship with the church administration and seeks to maintain that by avoiding militant or hostile actions. It speaks as the single voice of the membership groups, promoting their positions through letter writing, telephone contacts, speaking appointments, and other actions.

Adventist Women's Institute

Probably the most adventurous in expressing their opinions on women's equality, Adventist Women's Institute (AWI) is especially committed to action for justice within the Adventist Church. Formed in 1988, AWI publishes a magazine called *Ponderings* and more recently has experimented with a new style of leadership, replacing the traditional vertical hierarchy with a circular form of government that it has described as "challenging but empowering."

One of AWI's chief purposes, according to an official statement, is "to provide a forum for an independent group of women to speak freely on issues of justice and

policy...without regard to threats of reprisal from employers or denominational bureaucracies."

AWI sees itself as a voice for women who are hurting, and to that end, as a crusader for justice and equality within the Adventist system.

The Office of Women's Ministries

One of TEAM's stated aims in 1990 was to urge the North American Division to fund a full-time Women's Ministries Director. Today, women's ministries departments can be found from the local church all the way up to the Office of Women's Ministries, at the General Conference level. The women's ministries officer in the local church, conference, and union is sometimes paid and sometimes a volunteer. Liz Sterndale is the director of the North American Division Women's Ministries Department.

Rose Otis, General Conference department director, states that the goal of her office is "to uphold, encourage, and challenge Adventist women in their pilgrimage as disciples of Jesus Christ and members of His world church." Her department publishes a newsletter called *Women's Focus*. It has also produced a devotional book for women in 1993, *Among Friends* and in 1994, *Listening Heart*. The royalties from these books support scholarships for women ministerial students. The department also provides seminar materials on topics such as Bible study, how to stop smoking, maternal and child care, and winning your spouse to God, which are translated into many different languages and distributed around the world. It is also working with Andrews University to develop a survey on sexual abuse that can be used as a basis for educational materials and seminars to address the problem in the future.

On the division level, the women's ministries office has traditionally provided retreats but is also interested in helping women gain employment, recognition, and representation within their churches and communities. Each union, conference, and local church plans and operates its own women's ministries program in accordance with local interests and needs.

Shepherdess International

Started in 1982 at the same time the AAW was getting started, Shepherdess International's specific goal is to support minister's wives throughout the world church. Since its inception, Shepherdess International, a part of the General Conference Ministerial Association, has distributed resource materials, coordinated meetings for minister's wives, provided articles on relevant issues in *Ministry* magazine, and published the *Shepherdess International Journal*.

Summary

Although different in purpose and organization, these groups have worked together to achieve similar goals. The AAW, as the largest, makes a point of giving support and visibility to other women's groups.

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Ecofeminism: Inclusive Theology for the Nineties

by Sheryll Prinz-McMillan

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IN TALKING ABOUT GOD, THEOLOGIANS SAY A LOT ABOUT themselves and their own needs, fears and pain. For example, David looked to God's "strong arm" when needing protection from enemies. Many theologians have just begun to recognize the extent to which cultural situation, ethnicity, and even gender affects one's theology. Today, we face an ecological crisis, alienation of people from one another and from God (think: Bosnia), and differences which separate women and men (think: Bobbitts). A new way to talk about God in the face of these challenges is the branch of theology that listens to God speaking through the voices of women. Male oppression has in the past quieted these voices, and they need to be heard for humanity to be whole. A combining of feminist theology with a concern for ecology results in a new breed of theology called ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is concerned with reconciling the powerless and powerful, female and male, nature and humanity. Ecofeminism is an inclusive theology for the nineties.

Women & Mother Earth Through the Ages

Women, and material existence more generally, have long been disparaged in Western history. The early metaphor of the earth as nurturing mother gave way to later mechanistic imagery. Plato was one of the first to equate thought ("idea") with good, and matter (including women) with evil. From this type of thinking, the strong sense of dualism between soul and body, thought and matter, and in essence male and female, developed and became part of Christianity.

Influenced by these Platonic dualisms, Augustine believed that if the physical (matter) was evil, then woman was the epitome of sin, "the handmaiden of the devil," because children (matter) were born through her. He even wrote that woman was created for no other purpose than to be simply the receptacle for producing children!

Copernicus described the movement of the heavens as producing semen into the receptive earth. Similarly Leonardo da Vinci compared the water under the earth to the blood veins of a woman.

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Female imagery described the earth sometimes as a kindly, beneficent female, sometimes as a wild and uncontrollable woman to be subdued. This wild image prevailed during the 15th and 16th centuries, and a direct connection can be made to the witch trials of the time, which viewed women as *too* closely associated with nature.

The advent of the scientific method and mechanization led to greater degrees of control, both of the earth and of women. King James I thought the changing dress of women was connected with the "world being out of order." Francis Bacon suggesting that torture devices be used in interrogating witches to find nature's secrets. He argued that men need not refrain from "entering and penetrating" into all the "holes and corners" to discover both the witches' and the earth's secrets. Thereafter, Bacon's bold sexual imagery became part of the modern experimental method. Today we still discuss the need for "hard facts" and a "penetrating mind;" we mention the "thrust of the argument."

As the advent of the scientific method in the 16th century promoted control and abuse of the earth, so women lost significant economic and social roles. In 1511, women were forbidden to weave, because increasingly, strength was needed to operate the looms. In the 17th century, midwives were displaced by those "scientifically" trained in the medical schools, which only men could attend. Even reproductive views of this time saw the woman as supplying only warmth and nutriment for the embryo's development.

The 19th century brought a return to "mother earth" imagery and with it, the doctrine of separate spheres for men and women—women were to be home producing healthy children. Unfortunately, this did not lead to respect for nature or for women's autonomy; instead the idealizing of women destroyed the vision of their full personhood. Women became equated with nature, and men with culture, to both their losses.

Ecofeminism: Connection and Wholeness

To restore these losses and build connection, ecofeminism promotes connectedness and relationality and opposes all dualisms which alienate, such as body vs. soul, nature vs. culture, and female vs. male. Ecofeminism affirms relationships—to earth, one another and God. In ecofeminist theology, spirituality is having a deeper connection to God and to God's creation; evil is alienation of people from one another, which actuates alienation from God.

Indeed, ecofeminist theologians move towards a holistic view of the body and mind, in some ways closer to an Eastern, and Adventist, perspective, than to orthodox west-

ern Christianity. Ecofeminism coincides with the Adventist idea that the "soul" is the breath of God and the breath of life (Gen 2:7). Ecofeminists use the term "interconnectedness" to represent not only the link between body and soul, but also the links between God and humanity, humanity and nature, and humanity with one another. They emphasize a spirituality that echoes John: "Where God is in all, through all, and in Christ, all are one" (see John 16:20-23).

Because of this deep connection of all creation in God, one cannot separate service to God from service to humanity and nature. In fact, to see life and thought as separate from each other is dualistic; spirituality cannot be mere reflection, feeling, or thought, but must involve reconciling action. Justice, service and healing must be extended to the poor and alienated, and also to all of creation, which also is "groaning" due to sin (Hosea 4:2, 3; Micah 1).

A more relational understanding of God also brings a new understanding of the Holy Spirit. As theologian Sallie McFague points out, the "breath" of God the Spirit enlivens and maintains all of life, as does the air we breathe. This view emphasizes God's nearness as well as the connection of humanity to the rest of creation. Since all of creation shares in the very breath of God, all of creation shares in the very soul of God.

Adventist Ecofeminism

For Adventists, viewing the soul as God's breath is a simple step. Moving towards a more relational theology, however, calls for eco-justice, service to creation. This rethinking of theology moves beyond doctrine, to an empowering, contemplative and active spirituality. In the past, Adventists served humanity in various ways; one example is our Adventist Development and Relief Agency. Extending such service to the rest of creation simply represents greater consistency and justice. Adventists can thus have a sounder theology of "ecology" (from the Greek word for "house"). Adventists should be concerned with the house in which we all live—the one in which God has breathed the power of life. Adventist "house-keeping" includes:

Co-participation. Because of Kellogg's early dabble with pantheism, Adventists have hesitated to explore the presence of God's breath in and around us, enlivening all of creation. To avoid pantheism (God is only in us), Adventists may have moved to the other extreme—God is only far from us. We must explore the middle ground, where God is more than creation, but very present in it. We can enjoy the closeness of God's presence in us and in all of creation, and we can more fully understand the work and presence of the Holy Spirit. We can move from the language of instrumentality—God "using" us, to relationality—participating with

God. We should extend our Adventist participation in the controversy with evil to include a nature that needs our protection, empowerment and co-participation.

Relational language could also help in understanding inspiration, particularly the gift of prophecy as experienced by E. G. White. An instrumental view of God sees God "channeling" through a human instrument, but a relational God is interconnected with all of creation, and works *with* prophets, rather than through them. This relational view of God would make it difficult to assume verbal inspiration, for the prophet would be working in relationship with God.

Creation Connection. Aspects of the Adventist lifestyle can remind us that our actions affect others. For instance, gardening reminds of our connection to the earth, and minimal adornment our solidarity with those who are poor and oppressed. The adornment we do wear can remind us of the beauties of God's good creation.

Creation itself, viewed through the eyes of an ecofeminist spirituality, is not seen as evil matter or original sin, as Augustine claimed. Rather, creation retains its integrity as God's "good creation" (Gen. 1) where the earth, the animals, and all God's "little ones" are valued. Each thing in creation reflects God's glory simply by existing and fulfilling the distinct purpose for which it has been created. Humankind, called to reflect the image of God, is called into partnership with God to restore all of creation to its primary function—to give glory to God. Stewardship is not done in business terms, but in relational ones.

Vegetarianism. Out of this high regard for all of creation, many ecofeminists support a vegetarian lifestyle as a commitment to the value

of life, to non-violence, to the intrinsic worth of animals, and to the sharing of the world's resources. When one does eat meat, one should do it in grace, remembering the sacrifice the animal made to provide the meal. Adventists have long espoused vegetarianism as method of prolonging one's own life. Perhaps it is time to look at this lifestyle for its relational elements as well. It is possible that even Ellen G. White saw a connection between this lifestyle issue and other "women's issues" (such as dress reform)—she is listed in modern ecofeminist literature as one of the early women to make the connection between women's oppression, the value of animal life and spirituality!

Sabbath. As *Seventh-day* Adventists, we already have in the Sabbath itself a long-standing tradition of relating to creation. Memorializing the creation event, the seventh day reminds us of our connectedness to the earth through its weekly cycles and the larger context of the month. The rhythms of Sabbath also remind us of the grace experienced each week and our ability to relax in the fact that God con-

Since all of creation shares in the very breath of God, all of creation shares in the very soul of God. For Adventists, viewing the soul as God's breath is a simple step. Moving towards a more relational theology, however, calls for eco-justice, service to creation. Thus, Adventists should be concerned with the house in which we all live—the one in which God has breathed the power of life.

tinues to be connected to the cycles of life, in all of creation. Sabbath calls humanity to nature, not for its instrumental value or as a call to see God's greatness, but to recognize creation's intrinsic worth.

An ecofeminist spirituality could be a primary task of the Sabbath, to remind us of our alienation from one another, from God, and from the rest of creation, and then to become the day of restoration, healing and redemption. Celebrating Sabbath allows all of humanity to join with the entire cosmos in celebrating its creator, a time for both men and women to reclaim their relation to God and to all of creation. Ecofeminist spirituality calls for Sabbath activities not only of contemplation, but of service to all of creation, including the earth. It should be a time to foster awareness of ecological problems and to contemplate the beauty and fragility of the planet, while living in solidarity, and working for justice, with all living beings.

The value of creation is noted in many places in Scripture. The jubilee years of Old Testament times showed God's concern for the earth's renewal and celebration. Jesus' inaugural speech of Luke 4 indicates that redemption is not to be limited to only the spiritual realm. Even the Lord's prayer of Matthew 6:10 asks for God's will to be done on earth as well as in heaven. As we experience God's transforming grace, we are called to look anew at our images of God and our relationship to the earth. Maybe now is the

Celebrating Sabbath allows all of humanity to join with the entire cosmos in celebrating its creator, a time for both men and women to reclaim their relation to God and to all of creation...a time of service to all of creation, including the earth.

time to reclaim the vision of God as nurturing mother as in Isaiah and the Psalms, a mother connected to all of creation.

The Challenge to Adventists

As God's power changes our hearts and lives, we can also hope for God's presence to be active in the world. Scripture describes creation mourning when sin entered and rejoicing as sin is conquered; even the early Millerites, with their other-worldly focus, quickly responded to a call to care for themselves and humanity. So too, Seventh-day Adventists today may be called to reexamine their hearts and theology, and extend both to include all of creation, and with it begin a work to heal the divisions between people, between the sexes, and between humanity and creation. We may find, as ecofeminism does, that spirituality is contemplation *and* justice, salvation is being personally saved *and* extending one's hand in healing; and redemption includes humanity *and* all of God's good creation.

The author and editors adapted this essay from the author's paper on ecofeminism delivered at the annual meeting of the Adventist Society of Religious Studies last November. Send \$3.00 to *Adventist Today* for a copy of the full manuscript. For more information on ecofeminism, read C. Merchant—*The Death of Nature*, R. Reuther—*Gaia and God*, and C. Adam—*Ecofeminism and the Sacred*. ☪

ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH ADVENTIST WOMEN'S ISSUES

Adventist Women's Institute
Magazine, *Ponderings*
PO Box 25794
Santa Ana, CA 92799

Department of Women's Ministries
Newsletter, *Women's Focus*
General Conference of SDAs
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20912

Shepherdess International
Newsletter, *Shepherdess International Journal*
General Conference of SDAs
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20912

Association of Adventist Women
Newsletter, *The Adventist Woman*
PO Box 7414
Langley Park, MD 20787

Women and Men Against Sexual
Harrasment and Other Abuses
PO Box 7414
Langley Park, MD 20787

Time for Equality in Ministry
Newsletter, *Teamwork*
PO Box 7816
Langley Park, MD 20787

Adventist Women's Coalition
Helen Ward Thompson
Rt. 1, Box 84
Walla Walla, WA 99362

~~Married to Pioneers, continued from page 11~~

had also been doing a fair amount of reading in theology when, as I remember it, I suggested that she take some course work in the seminary. She enjoyed the classes and did well. That's how it got started.

Wayne tells of his involvement in his wife's career decision:

When this came up, we discussed the possibility of her studying theology. She had studied English in college and had started graduate school. When we got married she had to quit because, with me in medical school, there was only so much money to go around. Besides, if I were to quit I would be going to the "University of Saigon," and that wasn't much of an option! So when this came up, we decided that now it was her turn to go to school.

Support for their spouses is only one aspect that makes these men similar to the more traditional wives of professional church leaders. Through their wives they experience the stresses of denominational employment. They also feel the pain resulting from structures which still have not found adequate ways to recognize and integrate women into leadership positions. As one husband confided,

It's hard being the husband of someone who is interested in doing theology in the Adventist church. When the church treats your wife the way it does, you have to be supportive. Where the church is right now it's not a very smooth road. It can be extremely difficult. You like

to think of your religion as something that buoys you up during the difficult times, but in some ways it's the church that is giving you something difficult.

Children's perceptions and attitudes towards life, work and the church are affected by their mother's involvement in leadership. While the fathers of these children are proud of their wives as role models for their children's development and decision making, there is a fear that the high rates of attrition, due to the difficulties of integrating into leadership positions, may leave their children without a real model for gender-inclusive leadership in the church. As they see their children forming their relationships to the church or, later, assimilating their own value systems, these fathers fear that their children's level of commitment to the church may be affected by their parents' difficult experiences. While they hope opportunities for church leadership will be open to their daughters, they recognize that it is unlikely that it will be any less difficult for them than it was for their mothers.

These husbands of pioneering women in the church do acknowledge the difficulties, yet they also see that their marriages to pioneers have contributed positively to their lives. Through their wives, they have met engaging people whom they would not have otherwise met. They are privileged to be part of the ongoing dialogue about what the church is and is becoming. They are enriched by the ministry of their wives and are drawn into a deeper understanding of God. The denomination is blessed by the contributions of these men. Like most of the wives of those in professional church leadership, they do not fit the stereotypical roles of pastors' spouses, but they should be affirmed and supported. ☪

~~Women's Groups, continued from page 13~~

Before the 1990 General Conference Session in Indianapolis, AAW and TEAM worked together to provide materials for the delegates, before the vote on women's ordination. TEAM, AAW, AWI and the Southeastern California Conference Gender Inclusiveness Commission together organized a retreat in September 1990 out of which the Adventist Women's Coalition grew. AAW and TEAM are also planning a jointly-sponsored program in September of 1994 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Camp Mohaven meetings, when ordination of women was first formally studied.

The topic of sexual abuse and harrassment has been raised by several of the organizations. The Women's Ministries Department will plan seminar and educational materials after they study the results of their survey, while WASH is dedicated to working more from the administrative end of things, communicating with committees and policy makers to effect change.

Along with the organizations mentioned above are many other local groups filling specific needs and interests in their areas. The Southeastern California Conference Gender Inclusiveness Commission, while technically local, has had a wide influence in developing policy and has also worked with several of the national women's groups towards common goals.

Mary's Place is a worship experience developed and presented entirely by women. It meets several times a year, usually at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland, and is led by Kit Watts, Penny Shell, and Beverly Habada. Another women's church service convenes on the campus of La Sierra University. (See *Women-Church*, page 7.)

Other local women's ministries groups are El Shaddai, Los Angeles; Bible Instructor's Guild; Lydian Women's Organization, Brooklyn, NY; Hannah-Rite, Brooklyn, NY; Women's Spiritual Koinonia, and BYKOT. ☪

SEVENTEEN DEDICATED WOMEN IN THE SOUTHEASTERN California Conference are serving as ministers—serving faithfully and with distinction. They have experienced the call of the Holy Spirit to minister to the needs of the church, and their lives and ministry attest the reality of that call. Several of them such as Halcyon Wilson, Sharon Hanson and Sheryll Prinz-McMillan are fully qualified in every respect for ordination. The Conference was ready to ordain them several years ago, and would have done so except...

Here in Southeastern the certification, job description, and remuneration of these women ministers have been identical with those of their unordained male counterparts—whom they have seen, one after another, ordained. They have not asked to be ordained. But only angels from heaven could watch others, no more qualified than they are, accorded the formal, human recognition of God's call, without deep hurt and the poignant question, "How long, O Lord?" How would the men being ordained feel if their roles were reversed?

Believe it or not, women are human, too. Like men they feel, and wonder—"Why?" We require these 17 to be super-human. We accept their selfless service and tell them we appreciate it, but the shabby way we treat them belies our fair words. Does that not associate us with hypocrites?

For eight years a very decided majority of the constituency in Southeastern California has gone on record at regular and special constituency meetings as believing in full and unqualified gender equality in the ministry. In 1989 the constituency authorized the establishment of a standing committee now known as the Gender Inclusiveness Commission, with the assignment of fostering gender equality in the ministry of the conference. Over the past five years this Commission, composed of both women and men, has met for several hours each month under the inspiring leadership of Penny Miller, and fulfilled the assignment the constituency gave it—in many and various ways.

At first the Commission encountered considerable opposition to the idea of ordaining women to the gospel ministry, but most of that opposition has now evaporated. The most vocal opponent of women's ordination—a male pastor—recently wrote the conference president that he had experienced a change of mind and heart, and gave his daughter credit for leading him into the light.

Justice Postponed is Justice Denied

Firmly convinced that it should respect the call of the Holy Spirit to accord women as well as men the sacred rite of ordination, the constituency is nevertheless hesitant to proceed without the approval of the higher echelons of church administration. Southeastern is loyal to the church and its leaders. But what shall a conference do when church leaders' counsel is in conflict with that of the Holy Spirit? Women's ordination is a moral issue. This endeavor to follow two masters leading in opposite directions creates a major dilemma for the conference. Which should it follow? When the religious leaders of New Testament times forbade the fledgling church to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit,

Peter responded: "We must obey God rather than any human authority." Acts 5:29, NSRV. Should Southeastern follow his example?

The conference, the Pacific Union and the North American Division have all gone on record in favor of ordaining women. But deterred by world divisions where culture discriminates against women, the General Conference has understandingly been reluctant to give its approval. It would be immoral for the church in North America to require those divisions to ordain women. It is equally immoral for those divisions to attempt to impose their cultural mores on the church in North America. The only logical and right solution to the problem is for each administrative jurisdiction of the church to decide the matter for itself, in harmony with what is best for the church in its part of the world, and to respect the rights of the others to do likewise.

The president of the General Conference has gone on record as recommending this procedure to the 1994 Annual Council for its consideration and recommendation to the 1995 session of the General Conference. Much will depend on the way in which the Annual Council and the next General Conference Session respond to Elder Folkenberg's proposal.

The past 20 years have seen one General Conference promise after another evaporate into thin air, and an interminable series of what appear to be delaying tactics. The constituency of the church in southeastern California ardently hopes that Elder Folkenberg's promise will materialize. We can afford to be patient a little longer. But who can predict what will happen if the result proves it to be still another broken promise and another interminable delay? Justice indefinitely postponed is justice indefinitely denied.

Justice indefinitely postponed is justice indefinitely denied. ❧

It would be immoral for the church in North America to require (other) divisions to ordain women. It is equally immoral for (other) divisions to attempt to impose their cultural mores on North Americans.

Adventist Hospitals Must Change or Fail

by James W. Boyle

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FOR MOST OF THE LAST CENTURY MANY LARGE ADVENTIST hospitals, delivering care over which they had almost total control, have had a major impact on their communities. But a church-controlled hospital delivering its own brand of health care may no longer be feasible in the coming health care economy.

In large metropolitan areas, the focus is quickly moving from hospitals to integrated health care systems, strategic alliances between a number of hospitals and physician groups. Hospitals that refuse to join these alliances will not be able to survive, say health care experts. In large regions, big multi-hospital/physician groups will be the only players that can competitively bid for health care contracts under the emerging national health care plan.

Further, in a large alliance of health care providers, control over one's own hospital operations may be strictly limited to efficiency measures. Experts suggest those alliances that possess a high degree of central control will function most effectively in delivering health care. They will move quicker, reduce duplication of services, require less administrative overhead and achieve greater economies of scale.

Being part of an integrated organization could present special challenges in maintaining the unique mission of Adventist hospitals. The primary challenge seems clear: unless an Adventist hospital holds a position with some leverage in the market, maintaining governance and control could be seriously jeopardized, if not impossible.

To choose not to participate in an integrated delivery system could bring serious consequences. Facing competition from large, integrated systems, an independent hospital could be poorly positioned to survive. In an environment with use rates already driven down by managed care, the hospital would likely experience declining market share because of limited physician and payor relationships. Ultimately such a hospital might not survive. In the event of failure, several issues surface that are relevant to the Adventist church, including loss of jobs for Adventist workers and, particularly, liability for debt.

A growing body of evidence suggests that health care can be delivered more cost-effectively through a capitated arrangement—the coverage of all a person's health care needs for a set monthly or annual fee. This arrangement is usually made by health maintenance organizations (HMO's). Businesses will increasingly request plans of this nature, and hospitals and physicians will need to align themselves to survive in this setting. Capitated plans change the incentives for physicians and hospitals, encouraging partnership in the delivery of care. They foster collaborative management of care, and reward good health status and patient satisfaction rather than quantity and intensity of care.

These changing incentives and external controls will reduce the occupancy rates of hospitals in many marketplaces. Inpatient days will decline, as will revenues. A study by Ernst and Young of the major metropolitan markets where Adventist health care exists showed that occupancy rates are projected to change from a current range of 60 to 80 percent to a range of 20 to 40 percent by 1998. The forces just described are alive and shaping change in market places where Adventists operate hospitals, as shown in the following brief overviews of four cities.

Chicago: Health industry experts predict the emergence of four to five dominating networks of health care delivery. The three emerging/existing systems are: (1) Evangelical Health System with joint ventures including Lutheran, University of Chicago, and University of Illinois hospitals, (2) Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's merger with PruCare to establish an HMO, and (3) the Northwestern Alliance Network. The Hinsdale Health System will need to affiliate with one of these alliances in order to channel patients to its physicians and ultimately to its hospital. (See "Crisis at Hinsdale Hospital," page 21.)

Kansas City: Kansas City is one of the most competitive markets in the nation. Most of the major health plans are offered, with nearly a million people enrolled in managed care in the 1.5 million-person market. Experts foresee three or four integrated systems: (1) Health Midwest/Blue Cross. Research Hospital has merged with 11 hospitals into a company that has forged a partnership with Blue Cross of Kansas City. (2) Kaiser Permanente is currently a minor player, but is expected to be a key force. (3) Columbia/Humana Health Plan. The local Humana hospital has affiliated with the Columbia Hospital Corporation, a national chain that has expressed interest in building an integrated system in Kansas City by acquiring non-affiliated hospitals in the area. (4) St. Luke's Health System. St. Luke's Hospital, a large tertiary teaching hospital, is developing a system

James W. Boyle is president and chief executive officer of Shawnee Mission Medical Center in Shawnee Mission, Kansas.



which currently has four hospitals. St. Luke's Health System has invited Shawnee Mission Medical Center to form a partnership. St. Luke's and Shawnee Mission, along with eight other hospital partners, own a managed care company with over 300,000 members. St. Luke's and Shawnee Mission also own, with two other hospitals, a newly formed HMO.

Los Angeles: In the Los Angeles market, physician groups and major managed care companies are exercising tremendous market power to direct business. For example, a major physician group purchased a hospital and is making an effort to form capitation agreements with numerous other hospitals throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

One Adventist hospital in the Los Angeles area has lost a significant physician group to the major physician organization mentioned above. Los Angeles has seen an accelerated drive in the acquisition of physician practices by such physician-driven organizations.

Portland: Portland is a hotbed of activity, with competition between Legacy Health Systems, Kaiser Permanente, Sisters of Providence and a few independents. Portland Adventist Medical Center is in a unique situation. While not integrated into any of the systems that control the market, it has access to the market through a joint ownership of Managed Health Northwest with Legacy. Legacy, however, is putting pressure on Portland Adventist to join it in a fully integrated arrangement. Thus far, Portland Adventist has implemented a joint venture for behavioral health services with Legacy.

These four case studies demonstrate that, in these markets, Adventist hospitals are confronted with the possibility that if they do not become players in the emerging networks, they may be left out of the market place. This is also

true of markets such as Denver, Dayton, Boston, Nashville, Fort Worth and San Diego. Adventist hospitals in Maryland are not currently facing the same issues of integration; however, they are operating in a highly state-regulated environment.

The strategic alliances being formed among hospitals in the major markets across the nation have special implications and raise important questions regarding Adventist health care:

—Will an Adventist hospital be able to survive in a metropolitan area without becoming a part of one of the emerging partnerships?

—How can Adventist hospitals participate in emerging regional networks that might require shared governance and asset integration?

—Can Adventist hospitals preserve their mission in a shared, centralized governance arrangement?

—How can an Adventist hospital address the issue of preserving its unique mission without being perceived as self-serving by other hospitals and its community?

—Are there creative ways for Adventist hospitals to participate in these networks, alliances and systems?

—Does the new focus on health status, prevention and wellness provide an opportunity for Adventist health care to share some of the fundamental principles that have guided its development through the years?

—Does the proposed health care arrangement, focusing on a community of enrolled members, provide Adventist health care with an opportunity for touching lives through vertically integrated systems of health care in lifetime partnerships? 🐼

REFLECTIONS ON BERLIN: THE 9TH INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONGRESS

by Bruce Moyer, Senior Advisor (AIDS), Adventist Development and Relief Agency

DELEGATES NUMBERING 12,000 CAME TO BERLIN FOR THE 9th International Congress on HIV/AIDS, hopeful that there might be some breakthrough. When the week was over, we returned to our home countries frustrated, angry and confused. Despite all the successful scientific research, the disease progresses, almost unabated.

What should be the Seventh-day Adventist response?

First, we must beware of practicing denial. Our church has AIDS! Our brothers and sisters, our children and our friends, are sick and dying. Fourteen million infected people in the U.S. is not a myth, and the number is expected to rise to forty million by the end of the decade.

Second, if a standard, "old-fashioned" Christian lifestyle was good before 1980, it is suddenly even better. People who do not use illegal drugs and do not have sex promiscuously have little to fear from the HIV virus.

Finally, because we have the example of Jesus loving all people, lavishly and indiscriminately, we who are committed to being his disciples have the privilege and responsibility of doing the same. One of the tests of "disinterested benevolence" is that we love those who cannot possibly love in return. That is generally the case of people with HIV/AIDS. This lavish and indiscriminate love must be shared both within the church and with those who do not know Jesus, who have little or no hope in God.

On a recent visit to the city of Calcutta, I paid a brief visit to Mother Teresa, whose incredible love and ministry is a model for all Christians. We should do no less, and we have the infrastructure to do much more.

HIV/AIDS will doubtless become the defining issue of this decade. How we, as Christians, respond to it will define us as God's people in deed, or merely in word. 🐼

Crisis at Hinsdale Hospital

by Raymond Cottrell

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HINSDALE HOSPITAL IN HINSDALE, ILLINOIS, A SUBURB OF Chicago, is a member of Hinsdale Health System, an Adventist corporation. On December 7 the System Board peremptorily fired Ken Bauer, the hospital's chief executive officer since 1986. This move came as a complete surprise to everyone including Bauer, the Hinsdale Hospital Board, the 300 doctors who serve the hospital, the community and officers of the Lake Union Conference and Illinois Conference. System board members acknowledged that there was no suggestion of unethical, illegal, incompetent, or immoral conduct, but neither the Board nor the president of the Hinsdale Health System, Charles Snyder, has cited a reason for the firing, which he said was "confidential." On February 10 the Health System refused a request by *Adventist Today* for an explanation.

Protest from all directions was immediate and emphatic. Dr. Larry Gunn, president of the Hinsdale Hospital Medical Staff, said, "We are uniformly opposed to the action," and vice president Dr. Richard Bulger referred to it as "the most devastating blow he could imagine," adding that the System Board "was totally out of touch with reality" and that the action could prove "devastating to the hospital." The *Chicago Tribune* reported that the doctors were "angry and shocked."

Commenting on "the many substantive contributions Hinsdale Hospital has made to the community" being "due to Ken's hard work and dedication," State Representative Judy Biggert said she was "absolutely astounded at the action."

One member of the Hospital Board said he was "stunned," that in his view "this is worst possible action at the worst possible time," and that it "may seriously jeopardize the future of the hospital." Another board member said she was "shocked."

What made the firing appear arbitrary and unjustified was the fact that the hospital had prospered under Bauer's administration and that the Hospital Board, the entire staff, the doctors, and the community immediately rallied to his defense. On December 21, in defiance of the System Board, the Hospital Board reinstated Bauer and petitioned the Lake Union Conference to remove the System Board members from the Hospital Board. The relationship between the two boards was evidently an unresolved issue.

A member of the Hospital Board attributed the firing to "differences in regard to organizational structure and long-term policy." During the 1980s the Health System had experienced losses of some \$45 million as a result of failed diversification efforts. Hinsdale Hospital was not involved in these losses but was required to provide the Health System with \$30 million to cover the losses—much to the displeasure of its medical staff and those responsible for its financial integrity. In addition, the system has had to close one of its hospitals and sell another—Battle Creek Adventist Hospital—at a loss. The Hinsdale System has refused to give an accounting of its financial operations. Another unresolved

issue between the two boards is the question of Hinsdale Hospital networking with another nearby hospital—a process going on across the country in anticipation of Clinton's national health care plan, or whatever plan Congress may enact.

On February 1, the System Board removed five of the Hospital Board members and changed the bylaws to expand the System's authority over the Hospital Board and its chief executive officer. As a result, on February 8, Bauer tendered his resignation, citing "the lack of timely resolution of the underlying issues of governance that address the concerns of the medical staff," and continuing "differences regarding the role, responsibility, and authority of the HH Board of Trustees in relation to the HH System. This," Bauer said, "left him in an untenable position" and "unable to function effectively, professionally or with integrity."

On December 7, 1993, the Hinsdale Adventist Health System fired Ken Bauer, the hospital's chief executive officer, to the complete surprise of everyone including Bauer, the Hinsdale Hospital Board, the 300 doctors who serve the hospital, the community and officers of the Lake Union Conference and Illinois Conference. There was no suggestion of unethical, illegal or immoral conduct.

Editorial Note: All of these proceedings raise several significant questions about the Hinsdale Health System. If, on February 1, the Hinsdale System Board considered it necessary to revise its bylaws in order to assert its authority to remove Bauer as Hinsdale Hospital CEO, did it have authority to do so on December 7, and why was it unwilling to give a reason for its action? Why should a System that went \$45 million into debt and is unwilling to make its financial operations public have control of a hospital that has been operating successfully and has an excellent rapport with its medical staff and the community it serves? These questions remain unanswered as events continue to unfold in the Hinsdale Adventist Health System. —RC

Letters to the Editor

Reactions to "Generational Perspectives"

Gary Patterson's article on church leadership (Nov/Dec 93) raises some interesting questions.

In the 1940s and 1950s pastors were popular leaders, and young men were eager to get into the ministry. In the 1960s through the 1970s administrators came on strong. The "Military Model," as Patterson calls it, was in style. Many pastors began to think about how to get "up the ladder," and, interest in entering the ministry began to wane.

I'm not sure about how pervasive this negative influence is on young men who have thought about ministry, but have lost their desire. Are they afraid to confront the "Military Model?"

If this is an "institutional revolution" as Patterson describes the changes in leadership, maybe we need to pray more fervently for the power of the Holy Spirit and a model that is democratic.

J. Mel Clemons
Greenville, TN

I was struck with the Nov/Dec 93 issue of *Adventist Today* regarding the loss of the church's youth and the issue of sexual abuse.

As an elementary student in the Adventist school system, I looked to our youth leadership as a reflection of God. One teacher in particular was the hero of my adolescence. The extra attention I received made him all the more remarkable. When that attention turned to sexual games and intercourse I was shattered. Believing it was somehow me that affected this holy man, I bravely went to a church elder for counsel. I was told by this elder to "pray hard so that the Devil could no longer use me to tempt this man." I was 13 years old!

Now, as an adult in my 30s I am one of the many professional Adventist young people who have drifted away. To blame my absence on this trauma alone would be at best, simplistic. However, it is my reality that the faith and trust I had in our church, as a body of people, was destroyed. Furthermore, I dealt with the very real fear that if I attended *any* of the churches in my area I would risk running into this person, let alone hear him preaching from the pulpit. This man continues to teach in the church school system. I tremble when I think of the possibility that his behavior may have continued, with another vulnerable child in his trust. And yet, the risk of public confrontation, with the devastation it would have on his wife, children, my family and even the church community, doesn't seem worth the cost.

I share this, not to jump into talk show-like, sensational story-telling, but to help with the process of "tough love" that you referred to. Clearly, the Adventist church is made of people no better or worse than the rest of the world. The fact that I'm beginning my exploration back to the edges of

the church through literature such as your magazine is a positive sign for me, too.

Name withheld by the editors
California

Your publication is certainly well appreciated! Living in Indiana, it is easy to become discouraged with the lack of awareness that exists as to what is happening in the church. Your publication is a breath of fresh air to combat the rigidity, close-mindedness and general unacceptance of any differing opinion and viewpoints which exists in the church from which we have been driven. We consider AT one of the few points of contacts we have with genuine Christ-centered Adventism. Keep up the excellent work as contained in the Nov/Dec issue.

David and Janice Pierson
Ft. Wayne, IN

Two Responses to Four Adventisms

As I read your latest issue, I was impressed by the profound wisdom expressed by K. Wood in his lead article where he stated the following: "Though (the church) has adopted a statement of beliefs, it does not have a creed."

Following the writer's example, I "immediately reached for the dictionary" and read the following definition: "creed, a statement of beliefs." Allow me, therefore, to paraphrase Wood's statement as follows: "Though (the church) has adopted a statement of beliefs, it does not have a statement of beliefs." Can anyone top that?

Nic Samojluk
Loma Linda, CA

The four faces of Adventism—mainstream, evangelical, progressive, and historic—are not mutually exclusive; many of us would claim to be all four. But we should distinguish between historic Seventh-day Adventists and Historic Seventh-day Adventists. HSDAs have their own ordinations, their own segregated camp meetings and their own channels for tithes.

Only HSDAs would refer to our church as "the abomination of the earth—SDA Denomination" (Voice of Hope International), claim that the ministers in the Oregon Conference are throwing Bibles and the Spirit of Prophecy in garbage cans (Prophecy Countdown), or write that La Sierra College sent "most of a thousand students and half a hundred faculty into the community on Sabbath to scrape, prepare and paint houses..." (Steps to Life). Ralph Larson cannot claim to speak for historic Seventh-day Adventists while he continues to associate so closely with those who promote these ridiculous attacks.

David Patterson
Big Stone Gap, VA

Editorial Note: Due to the large response to "A Gathering of Adventisms," more letters will appear in the next issue of Adventist Today.

Letters to the
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The Baby and the Bath Water

PERSPECTIVE

by Cherie Rouse

WHY ARE ADVENTISTS SO WEIRD?" MY NON-ADVENTIST friend, Jean, asked me. She had met some Adventists at her job. They were good workers, sincere and kind, but they talked about things she had never thought of as Christian concerns, like spiritualism and Catholicism, and not drinking fluids at meal times. Finally an Adventist friend took Jean to church. There she discovered a good choir that was anxious to include her. But some discussions at work and at choir still puzzled her, and so she asked me why Adventists are so weird.

I thought quickly of all the ways Adventists differ from more mainstream groups, with our prophetess and our prohibitions on jewelry, theaters, dancing and coffee. Then I heard myself say that "we've kept the bath water along with the baby!" I explained that Adventists have strong roots in the protestant reform movements of the 19th century, and that perhaps we've kept some 19th century culture and fervor along with "the truth." I insisted we have a wonderful baby in there somewhere, but was relieved that Jean didn't ask me to explain what it might be.

Since then, I've decided the bath water and baby are a useful metaphor. I wonder if some features of traditional Adventism might be unneeded bath water. One cupful might be the notion that the very words of the King James Bible are inspired and inerrant, which led to the proof-text marking sessions that consumed many of my childhood Sabbath afternoons. Others might include paranoia about Catholics; official, corporate discrimination against people because of their gender; prohibitions against movie theaters and certain kinds of jewelry; and insistence that life began on earth only 6,000 years ago. Are we saving bath water when we try to read Genesis 1 as science although it seems more like poetry and theology? Perhaps we ought to discard as bath water our failed efforts to enforce uniformity in a church which is now international, cosmopolitan and pluralistic in a thousand ways.

After Jean heard me explain about the bath water, she began picking and sorting among the Adventist ideas she encountered, sometimes asking someone if the issue they were arguing wasn't merely bath water. Eventually, her

search for a chance to heal, study, and question led her to a conservative Adventist school in the country. Last fall, she was baptized there into the Adventist Church.

I asked her why. She told me that the folks at this outpost were genuine—they were gentle and considerate, and they were honestly trying to learn the truth objectively and then really live the whole message in a practical way. Through her own study and questioning, she finally concluded that there *are* clear answers and clear ethics described in Scripture.

After Jean visited Adventist churches in northern California, southern California, England, Scandinavia and Europe, traditional churches, liberal churches, conservative churches and celebration churches, she observed that within all this diversity, the Adventist church has something special.

She likes the Adventist focus on the Bible, the desire for serious study, and the continued search for truth. She finds Adventism a balanced view that encompasses the whole life experience. She appreciates the Adventist sense of mission and of world-wide family, and the Adventist understanding of history. She thinks Adventists are right about the importance of the Sabbath and the law. "The rest of the Christian world is very shifty and gray regarding the law," she told me.

Some of my friends point out that what one values in Adventism—what one takes as the baby—might vary from one culture to another. One who has lived in the South Pacific explains that some groups there are especially concerned about diet; to them, Adventist dietary principles are the baby.

Even within a culture, different generations may see the essence of Adventism differently. When I was a child in the '50s, the eschatology described in *The Great Controversy* and Jesus' soon coming were emphasized. Now, I hear more about our health message, Christian ethics, and social issues—the need for brotherly and sisterly love and outreach across ethnic and other social boundaries. The twenty-somethings express a deep conviction about Christian stewardship of our environment.

Jean advises me that the bath water comprises the disputable matters of personal opinion. Summing it up, she says, "There's no need to judge each other on details of diet, dress, and behavior; on these things, we should be sensible and use our brains. Instead we need to ask what will honor God and help other people know God's love. You need to read a *lot* of Ellen White, and then you'll see that everything involves responding to a loving God." 🌱

Cherie Rouse has worked as an English teacher, research administrator, scientific writer, free-lance writer, and parent. She is copy editor of *Adventist Today*.



As We Go To Press

Andrews University Invites Andreasen to Presidency

ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, THE ANDREWS UNIVERSITY Board of Trustees invited Niels-Erik Andreasen, currently president of Walla Walla College, to serve as president of the university, in place of W. Richard Leshner who is retiring after a highly respected and successful administration. As *Adventist Today* goes to press Andreasen has not yet replied to the invitation.

The decision favoring Andreasen was based on several factors—the quality of his educational leadership at Walla Walla College, its financial stability and increased enrollment, and his vision of the role of a university. Also considered was the desire some felt for a person from the West Coast.

The search committee submitted two names to the Board of Trustees. The other was that of D. Malcolm Maxwell, president of Pacific Union College, whose rating by the search committee approximately equalled that of Andreasen. Other relative factors the trustees considered were age and publication record, and that Andreasen would be more acceptable to the conservative faction of the Seminary faculty and more likely able to bridge ideological differences between East and West and thereby lessen the need some feel for a second theological seminary on the West Coast.

The semi-final search committee list also included the name of Don R. Sahly, president of Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, who was favored by conservatives at the Seminary and by leaders at the General Conference and the North American Division with links to the conservative South. Sahly had also demonstrated strong financial leadership—with the generous help of Ellsworth McKee. The search committee, however, concluded that Andreasen and Maxwell have a more mature concept of the role of a university.

The search committee started with a list of 59 names that was eventually narrowed to six, which included Dale Twomley, manager of Worthington Foods, Peter D. H. Bath of Kettering College of Medical Arts, and Lilya Wagner, director of development and corporation membership of the National Association for Community Leadership. Personal

interviews with these six reduced the list to the two recommended to the Board of Trustees. ☛

Tempe Community Hospital Issue Resolved

A SUIT BROUGHT AGAINST ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM/West (AHS/West) by the Arizona Conference in 1990 was resolved January 10, 1994 when Judge Michael Wilkinson ruled in favor of AHS/West exonerating it of any wrongdoing. The dispute was based on sale proceeds of Tempe Community Hospital (TCH), which had been owned and operated by AHS/West since 1973.

In 1981 the Health System Board voted to sell the hospital and re-invest the proceeds in retirement centers and skilled nursing facilities. However, due to unforeseeable changes in state laws and a downturn in Arizona's economy, these endeavors proved unprofitable. The Health System Board voted to sell the retirement centers and skilled nursing facilities, and AHS/West experienced significant losses.

Although the conference officials had been part of the decision-making process, the Arizona Conference and certain of its members later filed a lawsuit against AHS/West. Although the two entities met twice for mediation, once with a church leader and in another instance with a professional mediator, the Arizona Conference ultimately opted to seek resolution through litigation.

Several proceedings and trials took place from March of 1992 to earlier this year when Judge Wilkinson signed a judgment stating: "...the court finds in favor of the defendants, AHS/West, Pacific Living Centers and TCH, Inc. and against all plaintiffs."

Prior to Judge Wilkinson's decision and on behalf of the Arizona Conference, its president, Herman Bauman, issued a statement agreeing to drop all claims against AHS/West and stating that "it is the sincere desire of the Arizona Conference and AHS/West to put the entire litigation behind them and to move forward from this day together to focus their energies on the mission of the church." ☛

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