

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day 2004

June 12, 2004

RESOURCE PACKET

“Show Us the Savior”

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Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division**

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day Resource Packet

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Introduction

Dear Women's Ministries Leader:

Thank you for your interest in creating a special worship experience for Women's Ministries Emphasis Day 2004. This Resource Packet is exactly that – simply a resource. You can use any or all of the suggested materials -- or do something completely different. The packet has been designed to encourage maximum participation of women of all ages -- from adolescents to grandmothers. Feel free to be creative as you adapt its contents for your own culture and congregational needs.

One of the beauties of ministering as women of God is that we have something unique to offer during all of the different "seasons" of our lives. I hope that you will use WM Emphasis Day as an occasion to highlight the women's ministries activities taking place in your church, union or in one of the featured divisions. This could also be a terrific opportunity to recognize and encourage women of service in your congregation.

Before presenting this program, please consider organizing several special meetings with the women who will be participating, both to practice and for prayer and fellowship. This would be a time to mold the program to any particular concerns or gifts your women may have, but most of all to pray together -- that His name and purpose would be glorified through this worship service.

I hope and pray that these resources will be a blessing to you and your church!

In His Joy ~

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PS: Please note that where specific example materials have been enclosed (the responsive reading, children's story and sermon), optional presentation ideas have been included at the **end** of that piece.

Featured Divisions 2004

The four church divisions highlighted this year are:

- **North American Division:** Bermuda, Canada, Johnston Island, Midway Islands, St. Pierre and Miquelon, United States of America
- **Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division:** Angola, Ascension Island, Botswana, Comoro Islands, Kerguelen Islands, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Reunion, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, South Africa, St. Helena Island, Swaziland, Tristan da Cunha, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
- **East-Central Africa Division:** Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire and Zanzibar
- **Western Africa Division:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

About the Author

Kimberly Baldwin Radford is an American who has lived abroad for most of the past 17 years. Kim and her Australian husband, Colin, presently reside along Madagascar's beautiful east coast, organizing health and development projects amongst the poor. Prior to Madagascar, they worked with ADRA in Cambodia. Through photography and writing, the Radfords enjoy documenting the world's amazing wildlife and diverse cultures. Kim feels both privileged and humbled to have personally known the women depicted in the first two vignettes that follow. Their struggles have been a window to show her the Savior.

“Show Us the Savior”

Optional Worship Service Outline

Call to Worship	Isaiah 55:6-11
Opening Song	<i>Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #265 “Breathe on Me, Breath of God” ~or~ #266 “Spirit of God” (select one)</i>
Pastoral Prayer	<i>Please keep in mind the special needs of women in the highlighted church divisions, your local congregation, and Women’s Ministries in general.</i>
Offertory Reading	<i>You choose, bearing the theme in mind.</i>
Special Music	<i>You choose, bearing the theme in mind.</i>
Responsive Reading	“By Her Example...” (enclosed)
Children’s story	“A Cry in the Forest” (enclosed)
Scripture Reading	John 4: 39-42
Special Music or Hymn	<i>You choose, bearing the theme in mind.</i> (Optional hymn: <i>Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #493 “Fill My Cup, Lord”</i>)
Sermon	“Show Us the Savior: Stories for Reflection” (enclosed)
Closing Hymn	<i>Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #321 “My Jesus, I Love Thee” ~or~ #330 “Take My Life and Let It Be” (select one)</i>
Closing Prayer	

“By Her Example...”

Responsive Reading

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the women we find in Your Holy Word, women whose stories give us insight into Your character. Please help us to learn from their examples and apply them to our daily lives...

1) May we have the courage of Ruth, daughter-in-law to Naomi...

Who followed You into unknown situations, trusting that You would provide.

2) May we have the fidelity of Hannah, mother of Samuel...

Who remembered the promise made amidst her pain, and dedicated her son to Your service.

3) May we have the trust and sacrificial spirit of the widow of Zarephath...

Who willingly gave the last that she had to Elijah, both a stranger and a foreigner.

4) May we have the discernment of Esther, Queen of Persia...

Who recognized that You had called her “for such a time as this.”

5) May we have the enthusiasm of the Samaritan woman at the well...

Whose past reputation did not deter her from telling others about Christ, the Messiah.

6) May we have the humility of Mary, sister to Lazarus and Martha...

Who offered a fragrant and costly sacrifice, disregarding the scorn of those around her.

7) May we have the sincere faith of Lois, grandmother of Timothy...

Whose positive example reached across generations.

Lord, thank You that You have given us so many diverse examples, reminding us that no matter what our circumstances, we have a unique role to play in Your Heavenly Kingdom.

In Jesus’ name we pray,

Amen

Corresponding scripture references:

- 1) Ruth 1:16, 17
- 2) 1 Samuel 1:27, 28
- 3) 1 Kings 17:10-16
- 4) Esther 4:13, 14
- 5) John 4:28-30, 39
- 6) John 12:1-8
- 7) 2 Timothy 1:5

Responsive Reading Presentation Notes

This reading can be done in several ways. Here are a few options to consider:

1. **Using two people:** One person reads the lines in regular print and a second person reads the **sentences in bold print**.

2. **To involve the congregation:** One person reads the lines in regular print and the congregation joins in with the **sentences in bold print**. The entire responsive reading would need to be copied and distributed to the congregation at the start of the service.

3. **Using up to fifteen people:** If you would like to use a number of people for this reading, have a narrator read the beginning and ending paragraphs, while different **pairs** of women alternate reading the regular and **bold print** of each numbered section. However, if you are planning to involve a variety of women in the sermon, it may be best to keep the presentation of the responsive reading simple (options 1 or 2 above, or another variation of your choosing).

“A Cry in the Forest”

Children’s Story

This story is from Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world and one of the countries in our church’s Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Do you know where Madagascar is? If you look on a map, find the continent of Africa, then search for the big foot-shaped island off the southeast coast. That’s Madagascar. Our story today comes from the central east coast region:

Late one afternoon, a woman named Pascaline was walking down a narrow trail in the forest. In her basket was the money that she had made from selling fruit in the market that day. The sun was beginning to set and the forest was growing dark. Pascaline needed to rush home to begin making rice for supper. Her baby boy, Rivo, was tied snugly to her back with a wide cloth. He was getting fussy because he wanted to eat, too.

As Pascaline hurried along, she was surprised to hear footsteps behind her. Her heart began to beat very quickly. Just last week, her neighbor’s house had been broken into. Was the person walking behind her a friend or a thief?

Rounding a turn in the path, Pascaline decided to hide behind a big tree to let the person following her pass by. If it was someone that she knew, she would come out and they could walk home together. But if it was a stranger, Pascaline would wait many minutes so that the person could get far ahead of her and her little boy.

Quietly Pascaline crept into the bushes at the base of the tree. The footsteps on the path slowed down and then stopped. She was right. Whoever was out there *had* been trying to catch up to her! She held her breath with fear and stayed very still.

But Baby Rivo did not understand that they were in danger. All he knew was that his tummy was very hungry and it was time for mama to feed him. Buzzing mosquitoes began to bite his tender skin and he started to fidget and whimper. Pascaline knew that soon he would begin to cry and her hiding place would be found out.

Unbeknownst to Pascaline, on a branch far above her hiding place sat a dronga (*droon-ga*), a handsome bird with black shiny feathers. He had a proud curly feather on the top of his head and his longish tail was split like an upside-down “V.” Drongas are not only good-looking, they’re very clever. They can sing like many different birds and even “meow” like a cat.

The footsteps started again and as they came closer, baby Rivo began to cry to be fed, “Waaa! Waaa!” Pascaline bounced him gently to calm him, but nothing worked. “Waaa! Waaa!” Rivo cried, louder and louder.

Pascaline could hear the footsteps hurrying now. She grew cold with fear and almost leapt out from her hiding place to run away.

“Waaa, waaa!” howled baby Rivo.

“Waaa, waaa!” echoed a voice above their heads.

What was that? Pascaline looked up. She could barely see the bird sitting amongst the branches until she saw its black beak move. “Waaa! Waaa!” the dronga cried again. Why, he sounded just like baby Rivo!

Pascaline didn’t know whether to laugh or cry, too. If baby Rivo’s wailing didn’t give away their hiding place, the noisy dronga would. Through the bushes, she saw a flash of red shirt as a stranger came around the bend and stopped near the big tree.

From where she hid, Pascaline could see the man's sweaty, angry face – his eyes were bloodshot and scary-looking. "Please protect us, God!" she prayed silently in her heart.

Before she could do anything, Rivo started again, "Waaa! Waaa!" he screamed. The dronga answered, "Waaa! Waaa!" Pascaline froze as the man suddenly looked around. If she tried to reach behind her now to cover Rivo's mouth, the moving bushes would give them both away.

The chorus continued louder and louder, first from the bushes, then from the tree, "Waaa! Waaa! Waaa! Waaa!" The confused man spun around and around, trying to find where the noise was coming from. "Waaa! Waaa!" came an especially loud wail from the tree above. He looked up and spied the crying dronga.

"Oh, I don't believe it!" Pascaline heard the stranger mutter in frustration. "All this time, I've been following a BIRD."

The dronga let out another loud, "Waaa!" as if to agree. Shaking his head, the man stumbled off down the trail, back in the direction he had come from. After several minutes, Pascaline stepped back onto the path. She untied her hungry baby boy and hugged him tightly to her chest. As she continued walking, she praised God for sending a clever bird to save her and her little son.

Did you know that we are like that dronga bird? God has given each of us our own special voice, but it is our choice to use it for good or bad, kindness or meanness. We can use our voice to pray for others, or we can complain and whine. We can sing praise songs to Jesus, or we can make fun of someone with hurtful words that sting.

How will you choose to use YOUR voice this week?

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Children’s Story Presentation Notes

It would be helpful to begin by showing where Madagascar is on a map or globe. If you want the children to be actively involved in the story, have them practice making a crying baby sound, “Waaa!” before you start. Then ask them to “Waaa!” by the number of fingers that you hold up during the story: 1, 2 and 4 (as used in the dialogue). As an alternative, you may want to ask several adults or older youth (with advance notice!) to act out the story while you narrate.

The bird in this tale is called a “crested drongo” in English (*Dicrurus forficatus*), but has several different regional names in Madagascar. Two similar species of drongo are found in eastern and/or central Africa (*Dicrurus adsimilis* and *Dicrurus ludwigii*). Depending on where you live, you may want to use its local name.

If you are interested in having a visual aid of the bird, this is the best photo of a crested drongo that I could find on the Web (the bird is much more handsome in real life!):

<http://bibliofile.mc.duke.edu/gww/Berenty/Birds/Dicrurus-forficatus/>

“Show Us the Savior: Stories for Reflection”

Sermon Text

I. Introduction

Narrator: This year’s Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day features women from the North American Division and the three newest African Divisions -- the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, the East-Central Africa Division, and the Western Africa Division. We invite you to journey with us today, reflect upon these true stories, and catch a glimpse of the lives of some of the women who live where our church ministers.

We are women who want to find meaning in all the seasons of our lives – young, middle-aged, old, single, married, with children, without children, divorced, widowed. We are women who love our families and countries – broken and imperfect as they may be. Some of us are professing Christians; some of us have not yet seen the light and love of Christ.

Will you be the one to show us the Savior?

II. Bernadette: A Modern-Day Leper Woman

A. John 4:4-7a

Narrator: “Now Jesus had to go through Samaria. So He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as He was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water....”

B. Bernadette Speaks

["Bernadette" could wear a simple plain shirt or T-shirt, sarong and use a walking stick, if desired. Her feet: barefoot or wear basic plastic thongs/flip-flops or old sandals.]

Oh, how I can relate to a woman who comes to draw water in the middle of the hot noonday sun, trying to avoid her neighbors who are uncomfortable and embarrassed to see her! I do the same when I go to our village pump – collect water very early or very late. Some days I send my younger son in my place, but a full bucket is hard for him to carry alone.

My name is Bernadette and I have Hansen's disease. You haven't heard of it? Well, it's a nice way to say leprosy. No, no.... Please don't back away. You can't catch anything from me – technically, I'm cured. There's just nothing much that can be done for my disfigured hands and missing toes. I'm sorry if they upset you.

Do I go to church? Well, occasionally. There's a small one near our village that was built just for lepers, but it doesn't interest me much. Sometimes I send my boys to a Saturday church, but lately things have been just too hard. My husband – he was also a leper -- died when a leg infection turned into blood poisoning. He supported us by begging, hobbling five kilometers (three miles) everyday into the center of town. He made just enough money so that we could get by, but now I have nothing. No money to send my three boys to school – they're healthy, you know. I can't read. I have no skills.

My daughter-in-law is 20 and wanted to work during the last harvest. Ha! In a good season, you can make four times a monthly wage in just a few weeks if you don't mind sorting fruit all night. It seemed like a good idea, having her work and all, but her baby wasn't weaned yet. We decided that I would take care of the baby and we would get by. But something went terribly wrong. The baby wouldn't drink the sweetened tea

or eat the gruel that I gave her.... Then she got a terrible case of diarrhea. By the time we took her to the hospital, she was too weak to suckle again and the diarrhea just wouldn't stop. And she died. My beautiful little granddaughter died. All of the money her mother earned went for medicines, so we didn't come out ahead at all, and we lost our lovely baby girl besides.

What did you say? Would I like to come to church this weekend? Will I be accepted, do you think? I look different. I can't follow in the songbook or read from the Bible. Even if I could, it would be hard to turn the pages with these fingerless hands. I'd like to come...maybe. I just have all of these hungry sons to feed, you see.... Did I mention that they're healthy boys?

III. Flora: Facing the Reality of AIDS

A. John 4: 7-18

Narrator: "There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to Him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.

Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.'

'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?'

Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but

whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.' He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back.' 'I have no husband,' she replied.

Jesus said to her, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.'"

B. Flora Speaks [*"Flora" would be dressed as a working professional.*]

Greetings from sub-Saharan Africa! My name is Flora. I'm 32 years old and newly married. I could represent so many different countries...Malawi, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, to name just a few. I have an advanced degree in the biological sciences from an Adventist university overseas. Although I had the chance to stay abroad, I chose to return to my country.

There are many reasons that I came back: I love my country, my husband already has an established career, my parents are here.... But one of the main reasons that I have chosen to return is because I will be a mother soon. Congratulations, you say? Well, I won't be a mother of just one, but five! No, it's not quintuplets! You might call these children my inheritance. Let me explain: I am the only girl in a family with three boys, and two of those boys – adults, really -- are already dead. One brother had two children, the other had three. The children range in age from an 18-month-old baby boy to a 6 year-old girl. They're great kids, but I don't mind telling you that they will be a

handful!

I sigh when I hear the story of the woman at the well. If that were happening today in my country, our Samaritan sister would not have even made it to her fifth husband or sixth “partner.” She would have been dead much sooner from a disease that has deeply touched my family and many others around the world: AIDS. Is that a word that you don’t hear much in your church? Well, we hear it in my community whether we want to or not: It’s in the wailing of the women as they march to yet another funeral for a relative or friend in his 20’s or 30’s. It’s etched on the faces of the grandparents as they struggle to raise the generation of children that was supposed to support THEM. It’s reflected by the empty desks of missing teachers, too sick to come to school. AIDS is not someone else’s problem, it is our everyday reality.

Since I have the most stable job and the best salary, my brothers’ orphaned kids have fallen to my care. My two sisters-in-law – as many women do – died first from the disease. My own parents are old; my youngest brother is still in school.

So – wish me well and pray for us, please! The first two children arrive this weekend. It’s been a long time since they have seen Aunty Flora. Do I complain? No! Why should I? I have a future, and now maybe these children will, too. We are family and family helps each other. I am confident that God will be with us, but I am equally sure that there will be many rough spots along the way. I’m so grateful to have my faith to see me through, but how I wish sometimes that our brothers and sisters overseas REALLY understood what we are dealing with. We need to know that we are not alone in our struggle. After all, aren’t we all part of the same extended family of Christ?

IV. Mariama: A Muslim Woman Wonders

A. John 4:19-26

Narrator: "'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.'

Jesus declared, 'Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.'

The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' called Christ 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'

Then Jesus declared, 'I who speak to you am he.'"

B. Mariama Speaks

[Please note that Mariama would NOT be wearing a veil that covers her face. Her head might be covered with something like a loose flowing scarf that is thrown back over her shoulder. She would probably be wearing something long and modest. Patterned cloth would be appropriate.]

Salaamalikum! Greetings from West Africa. My name is Mariama. I am a Muslim, but recently my husband and I have had a curious encounter with Adventism. We don't know what to think of it....

We didn't know anything about Adventists until our little boy Youssouf got sick one evening. There was a man visiting our neighbor and he offered to show us how to

use charcoal and a simple solution made from salt, sugar and water to treat our son.

We accepted his kind assistance. After examining Youssouf, the man asked if he could also pray for him and we said, "Yes."

The next morning Youssouf was feeling much better. I asked the neighbor's wife who the helpful stranger was. She laughed and said that it was some Adventist – a type of Christian -- who bought things at her husband's store whenever he passed through that district. My friend said the Adventist liked her husband's products because he knew that nothing sold in the shop had pig meat or lard in it.

I couldn't believe it! A Christian concerned about not eating pork? When I told my husband, he was also surprised. In fact, I don't think that my husband believed me because he also began to question our neighbor about the stranger's beliefs. Then the story became even more complicated: Not only did the man not eat pork, he didn't drink alcohol AND he worshipped on Saturday.

It was many weeks before we saw the stranger again. When my husband met the man at the village market, he invited him to our home for a meal so that we could thank him for his past kindness. The stranger graciously accepted and arrived that evening. Imagine my surprise to hear that the stranger's name was Abdul Karim, "Servant of God." Here was a Christian man with an Arabic name who had not abandoned all of our traditional ways.

Over supper, Abdul told my husband that his wife would soon be teaching a five-day course on the prevention and care of simple diseases. The class was to be held in our local school building, which was available because of the school holidays. Would I like to attend? I was very pleased that my husband had no objections.

So, here I am. It's day three of the class and I am learning so much – not just about creating a healthy lifestyle for my family, but by watching this gentle Adventist woman. Fatou used to be Muslim and continues to wear a head covering. She doesn't try to preach to us, but when she talks about the great healer and prophet, Jesus, she respectfully uses his name from the holy Koran: Isa al Masih. She must be very confident in her faith because she told our class that she has destroyed all of the charms and amulets that her children used to wear to protect them from the evil spirits we have been brought up to believe in.

I am very curious about my new friend, but I will watch and wait. And maybe I will ask a few questions.

V. The Woman at the Well

A. John 4:27-29

Narrator: “Just then His disciples returned and were surprised to find Him talking with a woman. But no one asked, ‘What do you want?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’”

B. Today's “Samaritan” Woman Speaks

[“Samaritan” woman: Select the style of dress, differentiating from the other three women.]

Who am I and where do I come from? I live in North America, Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, Australia.... I am the sister with the questionable past or present, the one you gossip about because of how I dress or the color of my hair or the

jewelry that I wear to church. I am the woman of color in your society, struggling to be seen as equal. I am the compatriot from the tribe that you despise. I am the white farmer who has lost her land and livelihood in the only country that she has ever known.

I am the poor neighbor who cannot afford decent shoes or Sabbath-only clothing. I am the wife whose husband has left under questionable circumstances; the daughter who has embarrassed her parents. I am the one who struggles with alcohol. Who has been abused. Who has had an abortion. Who has been in prison.

Does my presence make you uncomfortable? Maybe judging me reminds you of the log in your own eye. All I want is for you to get to know me. To see me as a person and not a category of “them” -- an “outsider” to your inner circle. Who knows? We might even end up as friends.

Think of me as your own personal encounter with the “woman at the well.” Jesus, a man – and not just any man, but the Son of God -- took the time to stop and talk to ME: a woman of questionable reputation from a different nationality, different race, different religious beliefs. Why, just drinking from my water jar was grounds for being declared unclean! Yet Jesus looked beyond all of that to start a conversation about what was most familiar to me – wells, drawing water, my Samaritan history. He used the everyday in my life to explain to me what He had to give – eternal life. He didn’t attack the differences in our doctrinal beliefs; didn’t ridicule me for my promiscuous lifestyle. He didn’t turn away from me when His disciples arrived -- men who were embarrassed that their beloved teacher was talking to a woman and a Samaritan one at that!

Christ looked into my heart and saw that I had more to offer His work than a

mere jug of well water. By treating me as someone worthy of attention, he got MY attention and my life has never been the same since. Listen to what happened next:

C. John 4:28-30, 39, 35

Narrator: "Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?' They came out of the town and made their way toward him.... Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.'

Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."

D. Closing Question

"Samaritan" Woman Alone or All Four Women in Chorus:

Will you be the one to show us the Savior?

Sermon Presentation Notes

- Headings and scripture references are for outline purposes only and are not intended to be read aloud.
- The sermon was designed to include five women: a narrator and four "speakers."
- Clothing suggestions have been added within if the speakers would like to try and dress somewhat appropriately for the region of the women they represent.
- As noted in the introduction, these vignettes are true, although identifying details have been changed. The Muslim woman is a compilation of several stories from West Africa.
- Practice makes perfect! The sermon will flow much better if all of the presenters have had the chance to practice together and if each woman is very familiar with "her" personal story.

“Show Us the Savior: Stories for Reflection”

Sermon Outline

I. Introduction to WM Emphasis Day and Featured Divisions

- North American Division
- Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division
- East-Central Africa Division
- Western Africa Division

Will you be the one to show us the Savior?

II. Bernadette: A Modern-Day Woman with Leprosy

A. John 4:4-7a: The Samaritan woman encounters Jesus at the well as she comes to draw water.

B. Bernadette Speaks

- She is a leper who has recently lost her leper husband.
- She has a young family to support, but no job or skills.
- The daughter-in-law tried to take on seasonal work while Bernadette watched her unweaned baby girl. The baby died from diarrhea; all of her mother's earnings were lost trying to save her.
- Bernadette might be interested in church, but she feels out of place being poor, illiterate and handicapped.

III. Flora: Facing the Reality of AIDS

A. John 4:7-18: Jesus describes the “living water” that He has to offer and tells the Samaritan woman of her promiscuous past.

B. Flora Speaks

- Flora studied abroad, but has returned to her home country in Africa.
- She and her husband are about to take on five children – the orphans of her two brothers, who have both died of AIDS.
- Were she alive today, the Samaritan woman's lifestyle would have likely exposed her to AIDS.
- Flora pleads for more understanding from the global church family.

IV. Mariama: A Muslim Woman Wonders

A. John 4:19-26: The Samaritan woman declares Jesus a prophet and reminds

Him of the difference in worship between Jews and Samaritans. Jesus emphasizes that true worshipers must worship in spirit and truth. The woman announces that they await the Messiah and Jesus reveals that He is the one they are waiting for.

B. Mariama Speaks

- Mariama meets her first Adventist when her son falls ill and a stranger offers to help.
- She and her husband are surprised to hear that there are Christians who don't eat pork, don't drink alcohol, and who have Arabic names.
- Mariama's husband invites the Adventist man for a meal to thank him for his kindness.
- The stranger tells of a health class that his wife will be teaching; would Mariama like to attend?
- Mariama is impressed by her teacher, a former Muslim. She finds herself curious about this "other" religion, but will watch and wait.

v. The Woman at the Well

A. John 4:27-29: The disciples return, surprised that Jesus is talking to a woman. The Samaritan woman goes back to her town to tell people about Christ.

B. Today's "Samaritan" Woman Speaks

- Who am I and where do I come from? Examples of modern "Samaritan" women.
- We could be friends if you would get to know me more and judge me less.
- Jesus could talk to me without attacking my lifestyle and doctrinal beliefs. He wasn't embarrassed to be seen with me.
- He saw me as someone worthy of attention and that got MY attention for His kingdom.

C. John 4: 28-30, 39, and 35: Many believe because of the woman's testimony. Jesus reminds the disciples that the fields are ripe for harvest.

D. Closing Question: Will you be the one to show us the Savior?

~ In Closing ~

**“Let us dream. Let us prophesy.
Let us see visions of love, peace and justice.
Let us affirm with humility, with joy,
with faith, with courage,
that You, O Christ, are the life
of every child, woman and man.”**

*(from a South African women's prayer,
as quoted by Robert King in
Daily Guideposts, 2002, p. 316)*