

# **Women's Ministries Emphasis Day**

**June 9, 2007**

**“Remember...”**

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West-Central Africa Division**

**Produced by Department of Women's Ministries  
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SEVENTH-DAY  
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CHURCH

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My Dear Sisters:

You hold in your hand the 2007 Resource Packet for Women's Emphasis Day titled "Remember..." This program was prepared by Priscille Metonou, WM director for West-Central Africa Division. Priscille has a passion for evangelism

The title of the packet – "Remember..." – seems strange but the content is an important reminder to each of us as women of God. As always, you are free to adapt the information to suit the women in your cultural setting. Remember, this is a day when we celebrate women who have given of their time, talent, and even their lives to serve God. Take time to recognize some of these women and to praise God for their joyful service.

We are asking that you place emphasis on three divisions. They are the Trans-European Division and West-Central Africa Division. The following pages contain reports of the work in these divisions and we seek your prayers on their behalf. This information can be included in your Sabbath School program by women dressed in the costumes of some of the countries found in these divisions.

We appreciate your hard work and the time you give to this ministry. Our prayers are always with each of you and I know that God will answer each one.

Blessings and joy,

Director  
Women's Ministries

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
About the Author	4
Featured Divisions	5
Friday Evening Program	8
Worship Service Outline	15
Children's Story	16
Sabbath Morning Sermon	18
Sabbath Afternoon Program	25
E.G. White Quotes	28
Women's Ministries – How to Be Involved	29

## **About the Author**

Priscille A. Metonou is the departmental director for Women's Ministries, Trust Services, and Legal Services at the West-Central Africa Division (WAD) and is a qualified lawyer. She is married to Gilles Metonou, also a lawyer. God has blessed them with three daughters and two sons. Metonou loves Women's Ministries and preaching, is passionate about evangelistic meetings, and loves listening to Adventist Christian music.

## Featured Divisions

- Trans-European Division
- West-Central Africa Division

### Trans-European Division

Anne-May Wollan, Director of Women's Ministries

Territory: Albania, Bahrain, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Channel Islands, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Faeroe Islands, Finland, Greece, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Isle of Man, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and Yemen; comprising the Adriatic, Baltic, British, Finland, Hungarian, Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, South-East European, and Swedish Union Conferences, the Middle East Union Mission, the Pakistan Union Section, the Danish Union of Churches, the Iceland Conference, the Greek Mission, and the Israel Field. The membership is 102,592 as of December 2006.

**Adriatic Union Conference** Women's Ministries has been active in previous years but the Women's Ministries Director resigned recently and they have not been able to replace her. They had retreats, prayer breakfast where half of the attendants were non-SDA's.

**Baltic Union Conference** has reclaimed 3 members over the past 5 years. They have held 93 training seminars and held 46 evangelistic meetings. As a result, 20 new members have been added to the church.

**British Union Conference** has retreats or congresses attended by SDA and non-SDA women. They have held training seminars and evangelistic meetings. And as a result of this – new members have been added to the church

**Danish Union of Churches:** There is no church on Greenland but a new initiative is taking form to reach the indigenous people of Greenland.

**Finland Union Conference** has women actively involved in ministries both in the church and in outreach. Retreats are held every summer.

**Hungarian Union Conference** has women pastors, women elders, and they are involved at every level of the church.

**Middle East Union Mission** has most of the Arab countries in the 10/40 window, a very challenging and exiting territory.

**Netherlands Union Conference** has a yearly WM retreat with 10% of non-SDA women attending.

**Norwegian Union Conference** holds four Women's Ministries retreats yearly, one in each section in the country, and the attendance is growing each year. Several churches are also running Women's Ministries small groups where over half of the ones attending are non-SDA members. 62 members have been reclaimed over the last 5 years.

**Pakistan Union Section** has a growing Woman's Ministries with leadership training, Health Education, and several sowing centers to help women learn a trade to support their families. Over the last 5 years, 110 members have been reclaimed and 88 new members have been baptized.

**Polish Union Conference** has no Women's Ministries leader, but they have reported 38 retreats, with 775 ladies in attendance (74 were non-SDA).

**South-East European Union Conference** in one year held two retreats and two concerts to fundraise for children. Four evangelistic campaigns were held by the women at four different locations, one of these series were broadcasted over TV. As a result, they have reclaimed 11 former members and baptized 23 new ones.

**Swedish Union Conference** is currently starting a Women's Ministries at the international church in Stockholm.

**Israel Field** is actively involved in evangelism, small group ministry, and an English language school to reach the Palestinians in the neighborhood. They hold a yearly retreat, with literacy classes for the immigrants that come and cannot read or write, and they run a systematic Leadership training program.

## **West-Central Africa Division**

Priscille Metonou, Director of Women's Ministries

Territory: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo; comprising the Ghana Union Conference, and the Central African, Eastern Nigeria, North-Western Nigeria, Sahel, and West African Union Missions. The membership is 740,638 as of December 2006.

### **Literacy Program**

Most women especially in rural areas cannot read and write. So literacy programs were conducted in Mali (Muslim area), and in Nigeria.

### **Aids Program**

Information, prevention, training of trainers programs especially in the Ghana Union Conference.

### **Self Support Program**

All the Unions are actively involved in the various programs: flowers, hats, soap, oil, farming, trade, baking, cooking, tie and dye, and house decorations.

**Welfare Programs**

Women are doing very well by visiting orphanages, hospitals, prisons, sick and old people in the houses giving them cloth, soap, food and pamphlets.

**Street Children programs**

Central Africa Union Mission, women are taking care of the street children

**Women in Leadership**

In almost all the committees, women are represented even in small numbers at the Division, Unions, Missions, or Conferences, & churches.

## **Friday Evening Sermon**

### **Remember Miriam**

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 24:9

In reference to our scripture reading tonight, Miriam's experience is mentioned in this passage as a warning to everybody who claims to be God's follower. The Lord our God declared strongly, "Remember what the Lord, your God, did to Miriam on the way when you came out from Egypt."

#### **What really happened?**

According to Numbers 26:59, Miriam was the eldest child of a consecrated couple of Levites, Amram and Jochebed. When she became a young girl, she was capable of managing the strategy used for the preservation of the life of her little brother, Moses, in the River Nile. Some scholars said that "Miriam lingered around the water apparently indifferent, but in reality she was anxiously watching to see what would eventually happen to Moses."

When the time came for the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land, Miriam's name was prominent. In fact her name was first mentioned in the Bible after the passage through the red sea. Miriam led in the chorus of women. She took the lead in the song of triumphant, she was even called by a special title, "a prophetess," a person who spoke for God and communicated God's message to God's people. She was distinguished above all the women in Israel. (Exodus 15:20-21)

Miriam worked along with Aaron, her brother, who was the ecclesiastical head, the Priest. But the leader of all - chosen by the Almighty God - was her junior brother, Moses. (Micah 6:4)

In his administration and leadership, Moses called upon God and confessed his limitation that he was unable to bear the heavy burden of leading out thousands of people by himself alone. So in response to his concern, God directed him to choose 70 elders

whom He put the same spirit on to help Moses in guiding and supervising the Israelites. Moses did what God had told him to do but without consultation with Miriam and Aaron. As a result Miriam and Aaron became offended and complained bitterly against God's chosen leader, Moses, by saying that 'he married an Ethiopian woman.'

For this circumstance, God was displeased and withdrew His favor from Miriam and Aaron. The consequence of this evil behavior against Moses was a horrible white leprosy on Miriam. Having seeing what had happened to their sister, Aaron humbled himself before God and Moses intervened and cried to God for her sister's restoration. Miriam was shut out of the camp for seven days and the people did not continue their journey because of this incident. (Numbers 12:1-15)

Was this tragic outcome a result of Miriam's attitude towards her junior brother, Moses? Certainly yes! But our God of love does not want us to have the same attitude as Miriam's.. For this reason God is saying to all Christians: women, men, and children, "Remember Miriam!" This gentle reminder has many significant lessons for our Christian life today.

## **I. THE MEEKNESS AND PATIENCE OF MOSES**

Moses heard the bitter complaints of his brother and sister, but he never cried for vengeance. Rather he accepted their behavior in silence, he exercised great patience even under provocation, and he faced the criticism without defending himself. We see Moses praying for the critics instead of wishing them evil. This is a kind of leader to follow, a leader who is worthy of emulation.

Dear leaders, brothers and sisters, anytime you face criticism in your ministries or your life, or if you are tempted to criticize others, the Lord says, "Remember Miriam."

## **II. THE EVIL COLLABORATION**

The collaboration of Miriam and Aaron was scandalous. Aaron as the elder brother of Moses should have behaved better, but he did not. In reality, that evil collaboration is what some of our churches are facing today. Criticizing and destroying the leader is a typical 'end time' attitude instead of helping the person to do his job to the utmost of his ability. The Bible is giving us a special warning that we should not associate ourselves with such behavior.

My dear sisters and brothers, if you have these kinds of people in your church especially if they are elders, pastors, or Women's Ministries leaders, remind them to "Remember Miriam's case" and all the lessons involved.

## **III. THE VICE OF ENVY**

Envy is one of the most odious and detestable vices. One who is filled with envy in his/her heart is unable to rejoice in the successes of others. The Bible tells admonishes us to love as Christ loved. Envy destroys the love of God in our hearts.

Miriam, was a leader and a prophetess. Maybe in our time she would have been elected as Women's Ministries leader in her church. God had richly endowed her and placed her in a high position, but she was still struggling with her human nature, she was unsatisfied. Miriam and Aaron were disputing with their own brother, Moses, the preeminence of his special calling and his exclusive position. In fact they perceived themselves more capable than Moses, and they questioned why they were not the ones chosen to do the work. They challenged the fact that Moses was the only one to whom God spoke.

As Miriam became envious, she felt that she and Aaron have been neglected. They began to blame Moses' wife, finding fault with her, and saying that she was the cause of their predicament. They were thinking that probably she was the one who counseled the husband for not getting them more involved in the leadership of Israel. So she started degrading and criticizing Moses, as envious people always doing.

We can see that the love of power is a human weakness. Even today we can see the same behavior among church members. This behavior can easily destroy people, families, churches and communities. Therefore, Christians are warned to be guarded against the sin of envy. The Bible says, “No envious person will enter heaven” (Galatians 5:19). Yet God also invites us to be part of His family which means we have to put aside the vice of envy.

According to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, the following are some remedies to cure the vice of envy:

1. Don't think evil about people – especially those in authority
2. Be content with what you have
3. Be grateful for what has been given to you
4. Don't presume to be somebody you are not
5. Every avenue of the soul needs to be guarded lest self and pride enter which leads to envy
6. Remember what the Lord did to Miriam

Dear brothers and sisters, you cannot work evil so secretly that it will not be known. If we think evil, we will speak evil. That is what had happened in our story.

#### **IV. THE VICE OF EVIL SPEAKING**

The vice of evil speaking is natural inclination and custom of a human beings. It is the sin of tongue. Some scholars called it ‘double tongue speaking,’ injury, backbiting, murmuring, complaining, cursing, the readiness to speak the faults of others to destroy them.

In our story, Miriam spoke evil of Moses and God was displeased. So God departed from her and she was covered by the most virulent leprosy, a white one. As Christians we may also find ourselves following Miriam's transgressions by speaking evil of others. But God does not want that, so in His love, He is giving us a strong warning: “Remember Miriam!”

In a very particular means, God gives us some precautions against the vice of evil speaking:

1. Speak not evil, don't blaspheme! (James 4:10; Exodus 22:28; Psalm 34:13)
2. Cultivate the presence of God in our communication. Before we speak ask ourselves, "Would God approve of my words?"
3. Speak *"to people,"* not *"about people."*
4. Determine if your motivations are about self or the other person's welfare.
5. Select your words. (James 1:26). In addition to that, Ellen G White wrote in the book **"Fundamentals to Christian Education"** pg 459

*"Those who enjoy talking should select their words, they should be careful how they speak, they may feel it is not sin to gossip and talk nonsense but this grieves the Savior and makes the heavenly angels sad."*

6. Restrain the tongue. The best way to secure one's peace as well as to be in harmony with men and God is to be careful with our words. Avoid slander, falsehood, profanity, and erroneous opinions. (Psalm 34:13; Matthew 12:37; James 1:26; 1 Peter 3:10)

A story is told about a certain Assyrian who was walking through the city, offering the 'elixir of life.' A young girl, the daughter of Rabi Jodus, heard this person's promulgation and she went off to her father and told him about this man. With curiosity the Rabi called in the Assyrian and asked him about the 'elixir of life.' The man said that the 'elixir of life' is found in the Bible, in 1 Peter 3:10. This is the 'elixir of life' which is in the mouth of man.

Dear Sisters and brothers, if we want a desirable, amiable, quiet, comfortable, and prosperous life on earth as well as on the earth made new in eternity, we have to guard our tongues.

## V. THE LACK OF HONOR GIVEN TO THE LEADERS

The final point of this discussion is the lack of honor given to leaders. When we disrespect leaders, we don't give them due honor. In our story we can see the problem which was taking place. Miriam and Aaron did not give proper honor to the leader, Moses, even if he was their junior brother. The Bible is clear on this matter. According to Exodus 22:28 and 1 Peter 2:17, we have to fear God and honor the King. Our King can be a pastor, an elder, a mission/conference/union president/officer, the women's ministries leader, or our own parents. Any person in a leadership position whether in church or in the community.

The Bible says that we should respect our leaders even when they are not worthy honor, yet they should be respected on account of their office. This is because when respect is banished, subordination will flee, anarchy and ruin will rise up. In fact, Christians should never be found in sedition against a ruler. Take for an example, Nero, in the time of the Apostle Paul, was the worst of kings. He was upon the throne when he persecuted the Christians, but the fact the he was upon the throne, the command was to express honor to him as an order from God.

Ellen G White in "**Acts of the Apostles**" page 69 wrote, "*We are not required to defy authorities. Our words whether spoken or written should be carefully considered lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. Therefore we should lay aside, put off all dishonor and give honor to whom is due. Fear God, honor the king.*"

John 12:26 tells us that the honor given to a leader will not be in vain or without reward. If we faithfully defends our master's reputation and authority, and takes care of his estate,

we shall be honored and not shut up in a prison. She or he shall be doubly rewarded by God Himself.

Brothers and sisters, on the day of His return, Jesus Christ will crown His children with the highest dignity and honor. Praise the Lord!

## **Remember...**

### **Worship Service Outline**

#### **Call to Worship**

Luke 17:31-32

#### **Opening Song**

#### **Pastoral Prayer**

Please keep in mind the special needs of women in –

- **Trans-European Division**
- **West-Central Africa Division**

your local congregation and Women's Ministries in general.

#### **Offertory Reading**

#### **Offertory Song**

#### **Responsive Reading**

You choose. Bearing the theme in mind

#### **Special Music**

You choose. Bearing the theme in mind

#### **Children's Story**

Remember the Children of Bethel

#### **Sermon**

Remember Lot's Wife

#### **Closing Hymn**

#### **Closing Prayer**

## Children's Story

### **Remember the Children of Bethel**

Bible verses: (2 Kings 2:23; Proverbs 22:6; Leviticus 19:32)

**Song**: "With Jesus in the family, happy, happy home"

My dear little children,

There are many things that our loving God wants us to remember so that we can always be happy. This morning I am telling you that God wants you to remember the children of Bethel. Who are they, by the way? Listen to the story.

The Prophet Elijah, the man of God, has left for a beautiful and wonderful place called "Heaven." He left behind another godly man, a patient and meek prophet, and his name was Elisha. He was a man of mild and kindly spirit.

One day, Elisha went to Bethel to visit the school of the prophets, and on the way he met a large group of rude and wicked young people. Perhaps they had heard from their parents and the community about Elijah going to heaven in a chariot, and they made this solemn event as the subject of their teasing, shouting to Elisha, "Go up thou bald head; go up thou bald head. Go up . . .!" (2 Kings 2:23) They ridiculed and scorned him. These young people behaved as though they had learned good manners. They followed the prophet repeating insults and mocking him.

At the sound of their mocking and under the inspiration of the Almighty God, the prophet of turned and cursed these young people in the name of the Lord. Soon after, two bears came out of the woods and hurt 42 of the young people.

Children, our loving God is not happy when we tease or mistreat others. That is why this story is written in the Bible to serve as a warning and a lesson for all of us.

## 1. Lesson for mothers and fathers

The death of these children is a lesson. So our dear parents, we, your children, are appealing to you to train us as it is instructed in Proverbs 22:6, so that when we grow old, we would never depart because we don't want to suffer as the children in Bethel. Please direct us, give us godly training and prudent education so that we can escape dangers, and secure the blessings that God had prepared for us. Dedicate us to God, impress on our minds with noble virtues. To be able to do so, dear parents, we urge you to ask God for wisdom and He will help you and give you patience and tenderness.

Surely God will crown your efforts, dear parents, with success and we will become like Daniel, Joseph and Esther.

## 2. Lesson for the children

Children, you are special children of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I urge you to listen to your parents, they love you and they are putting all their efforts in your education. You have to be obedient to them. You have to respect old people, especially the leaders of the church, the pastors, the elders, as it is stated in Leviticus 19:32 where we are told to respect the elderly and honor them.

Dear children, if it is difficult for you to have such noble characters, there is one who can give you the ability to respect others. Call upon Him at all times, and He will respond to you. He is none other than Jesus our friend and Savior. A promise is attached to this respect that you will live longer and longer, longer and longer." Amen.

**Note:** Assign a young girl says the first part (a lesson for mothers and fathers), and a mother on the second part (a lesson for the children).

## **Sabbath Morning Sermon**

### **Remember Lot's Wife**

Bible text: Luke 17:31-32

Our God is a wonderful God. In His unconditional love, He created men and women to be happy and have eternal life. But Satan, our enemy, created disorder and sin. He brought suffering and eternal death. God therefore, provided a way out which is the process of redemption. He gave His only begotten Son to die and to save us that we all would have the opportunity to live with Him someday. Glory to the Almighty God!

However the concern is that our natural tendencies always lead us to sin and to eternal ruin. The Bible has many stories to instruct and to warn us against leading a sinful life.

The story for today is the story of Lot's wife which is found in Genesis 18 and 19. But at this point we will focus on Genesis 19:15-26 (NKJV). What really happened?

The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah and all its surroundings had gone so far that God decided to destroy the cities. In those cities lived the family of Abraham's nephew, Lot. While God was revealing His intention to Abraham, His faithful servant, Abraham pleaded for his relatives' safety, and finally God decided to save the family.

Angels were sent to Lot and his family to save them from the destruction. Unfortunately, his married daughters and their husbands would not yield to the message and refused to leave Sodom with Lot. Lot's wife and their two daughters lingered, not wishing to leave the city for a place of safety. They were taking their time so the angels took hold of their hands and led them out of the city. The Lord was so merciful to them (Genesis 19:16) that He brought them out of the city of destruction, and gave them a serious command: "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed. (Genesis 19:17).

They were now on the road of salvation, but still even at that stage, instead of running ahead, they were discussing with the angels to give them the opportunity to go to the nearest city. God once again allowed them to do so and then the command of salvation was given again. Recorded in Genesis 19:33, the angel says, “Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” God could not destroy Sodom until His people were in the protected zone.

In spite of all that God put in place to save the family, Genesis 19:26 tells us something which is terrible, “. . . but his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” What a tragedy! An event to remember, said Jesus in Luke 17:31-32, “Remember Lot’s wife!”

## **THE CAUSES OF THE ACT OF ‘LOOKING BACK’ ON THE ROAD OF SALVATION**

Mrs. Lot was a typical example of God’s mercy when He delivered her and her family out of Sodom. She was almost out of danger, but she looked back from behind her husband. What caused Mrs. Lot to look back in spite of all the divine intervention? Many things could have contributed to her looking back. Let’s look at the following reasons:

### **1. HER HEART WAS STILL IN SODOM**

While the body of Mrs. Lot had left the city, her heart was still in Sodom where she had left all her riches she had accumulated over the many years. Her splendid house with all the furniture, her special dresses, her money in the bank, and other prized possessions caused her to wonder, “Shall I see them again?” Oh! She wanted to quickly retrace her steps and take something, so she looked back.

### **2. CURIOSITY**

Possibly Mrs. Lot was just curious, “Will God really destroy Sodom? How will fire destroy the whole city? Will it really happen? Let me see how God will do this!” Then, she looked back.

### **3. INDREDULITY**

The fact that Mrs. Lot looked back to the burning city was the manifestation of her disbelief in the words of the angels. That is why she was lingering till she was forced out of the city of Sodom. She did really believe that God would do as He said. Her unbelief caused her to look back.

Brothers and sisters, the story of Mrs. Lot is a story which reveals our life style today. The Bible tells us that our world will be destroyed by fire and God wants us to escape in order to be saved. Therefore He has sent, and He is still sending messengers and messages to us as He did for Mrs. Lot. Angels are holding our hands to take us out of this world of sin so that we can enter the kingdom of God. The divine intervention is done through the sermons, books, and through hymns of inspiration. Can we imagine how many of these we have heard or read since we became Adventists? We can hear God says, “Escape for your life!” And we are like Mrs. Lot, we linger, we don’t move. The sermons of the coming of Jesus and the end of the world have become familiar to our ears and we are not moving.

Just like Mrs. Lot, we want to look back resume our lives they way they used to be. Sometimes because of life’s trials and hardships we are tempted to look back. We think that the church is too demanding so we want to go where it is easier to be Christians. Remember God is still sending warnings: “Escape for your life, come out!”

God’s warning is a sign of His love and His care for human beings. In His love, God gives us warnings because the act of looking back can be disastrous. When Mrs. Lot disobeyed the command of God and looked back, she became a monument of God’s displeasure. She was struck dead and turned into a pillar of salt forever. Oh! She

lingered, she longed, she looked back, and she died a terrible death. She was very close to the city of salvation, yet she could not make it. Almost saved but lost! What a pity. She is a perpetual warning for us. If we follow the same steps of Mrs. Lot's, knowing that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, if we disobey and look back because of one reason or another, the tragic result will be similar.

God says in Hebrews 10:38 that He has no pleasure in those who drawback because when we look back, it's just like we have forgotten Christ and all His sufferings. When we look back, it's just like we have given up trust and confidence in Christ. When we look back, it's just like we are crucifying the Savior one more time. Going back to our past sinful life will displease God. What a terrible thing when God is not pleased with us! More over Jesus is telling us in Luke 9:62, "Whoever draws back is not fit for the kingdom of God."

Dear brothers and sisters, we have lives to God, we are nearing salvation, we are almost home, but if we looking back is fatal! The story of Mrs. Lot is written for our admonition as it is stated in 1 Corinthians 10:6, "*Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.*" Looking back is destruction, looking back is death, looking back is sin, looking back is eternal ruin. The principle we have to remember is, "Never look back, remember Lot's wife, always move forward."

Here are some things that will help you always move forward and never backward:

## **1. TOTAL OBEDIENCE TO GOD**

Obedience to God is to carry out the word and will of God without delaying or hesitating. If Mrs. Lot did not disobey, she would have been saved. Obedience to God is life. It is the supreme test of faith and reverence, and such relationship should never be broken.

As Christians in these last days, we have to become patient listeners, and we should have the willingness to listen to God's words and to give Him our undivided attention.

Whatever God says, we should have full confidence in it. Whatever God commands, we should be ready to yield. Whatever God should enjoin, we should do. Whenever He asks us to go, we should go. Whatever He will say, we should believe as the song writer puts it: “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.”

God says in 1 Samuel 15:22, “I prefer obedience than sacrifices.” Jesus came all the way from heaven to this earth to show us how to obey. He did everything His Father asked Him to do even until the cross (Philippians 2:8).

There is a blessing in obedience. Mrs. White puts it in a beautiful way in her book **“Christ Object Lessons,”** page 305, “. . . *Blessing for this life and for the life to come – is possible for us only through obedience*”

Dear brothers and sisters, let us comply with the will of God, let us obey Him because this will help us to always move forward.

## **2. SINGLENES OF PURPOSE**

The meaning of having ‘singleness of purpose’ is to have one goal and to focus on one aim, not two or three. We find this example with the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:13, 14. He has one goal to make rapid advances, he exercised every muscle and nerve to reach his goal to heaven.

Paul had one aim and purpose in life. He did not integrate world and religion, wealth and salvation, honor and crown of glory, and that’s what helped Paul to be strong. The time has come for us to forget all behind that this world has to offer. We will accomplish little if we are distracted by a multiplicity of things, therefore we are to look onward and focus our mind on the coming of Jesus. God said to the children of Israel at the red sea, “Go forward . . . !” The same appeal is given to us today, “Let’s go forward, and never look back. God is there to lead!”

Dear brothers and sisters, time is flying so quickly. Eternity is at hand and everything is at stake. One thing we have to do is to press towards heaven. Obedience and having one goal is possible through Jesus Christ our Lord, fixing our eyes upon Him.

### **3. FIX OUR EYES UPON JESUS**

As human beings, we are feeble and weak, therefore, we could move forward only if we have our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

We have to fix our eyes upon Jesus because without Him, we have no power to go forward. Jesus alone can give us the strength, the help, and the power to obey and to act. Ellen G White writes, *“We are nothing, but Christ is all and in all. We may unite our ignorance to His wisdom, our weakness to His strength, our imperfections to His merits, our frailty to His enduring might” 7MR, pp41.*

We need to fix our eyes upon Jesus because He is our Savior. He endured the cross and all its shame. The sorrow in His soul, the torture and pain in His body, the piercing of thorns, the tearing of His flesh with scourges, the nails in His hands and feet, the malice of rage of devils and men.

We need to fix our eyes upon Jesus because He is the only one who can lead us till the end. We cannot doubt His love. Through Him we can obey God.

We need to fix our eyes upon Jesus because He walked this earth. He suffered like us, and He was tempted like us, and He understands our hardships and temptations. We will follow Him to the end. Our eyes will be fixed on Him day and night, and He will lead us to the heavenly city.

Dear brothers and sisters, we should rejoice. The promise of the Bible is absolutely certain that if we endure till the end, we will surely be saved.

My sisters and brothers, are you tempted to turn back? If so, please remember Lot's wife. Make the decision today to always move forward, never backward.

My fellow women, men, and youth, it will not be long. Very soon we will reach the heavenly city where we will be seeing Jesus face to face, the Almighty God and Redeemer. A crown of victory will be ours. The joys of heaven await us and we will be in the blessed society. Best of all, the Savior Himself will be there to receive us. By God's grace I will be there. What about you? Amen.

## Sabbath Afternoon Program

The program will be in three parts according to the size of the church and the time.

### I. PART ONE

A). **Choose twelve young girls to recite twelve Bible verses by heart. The verses should start with the word “Remember.”** The following are some verses for examples:

1. **Exodus 20:8**  
*“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”*
2. **Deuteronomy 5:15**  
*“And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”*
3. **Deuteronomy 8:18**  
*“Remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”*
4. **Deuteronomy 9:7**  
*“Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.”*
5. **1 Chronicles 16:12**  
*“Remember His marvelous works that He hath done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth.”*
6. **Nehemiah 4:14**  
*“Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”*
7. **Ecclesiastes 12:1**  
*“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw high, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.”*

8. **Isaiah 44:21**  
*“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.”*
9. **Isaiah 46:9**  
*“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.”*
10. **John 15:22**  
*“Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”*
11. **Revelation 2:5**  
*“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”*
12. **Revelation 3:3**  
*“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”*

**B). Special songs by Women’s Ministries choirs:**

- i) The young women
- ii) The adults

**Note:** If possible choose the song titles in relation with the theme of the day: “Remember.”

**II. PART TWO - Drama**

This part will be in accordance with the two sermons:

- i) Remember Miriam (Deuteronomy 24:9; Numbers 12:1-15)
- ii) Remember Lot’s wife (Luke 17:31-32; Genesis 19:15-26)

**Note:** These two stories should be performed in a ‘Skit’

- iii) Prayer

### **III. PART THREE**

Honor some of the women in the church, those who have excel in various Women's Ministries activities. It can be in the form of certificate, or gift, or both.

**NOTE:** It would be at its best to leave the coordination of this program to the young women. You may invite the women from the community/neighborhood to be present as well as to be involved in the program. Make this week-end as a special Women's Ministries Program "From Women to Women."

## E. G. White Quotes About Women

- ❖ “When a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to this work, and it will see the loss if the talents of both are not combined.”  
Evangelism 469
  
- ❖ “We may do a noble work for God if we will. Woman does not know her power for God...There is a higher purpose for woman, a grander destiny. She should develop and cultivate her powers, for God can employ them in the great work of saving souls from eternal ruin.” Testimonies Vol 4,642 and Evangelism 465.
  
- ❖ “There never was a time when more workers were needed than at the present. There are brethren and sisters throughout all our ranks who should discipline themselves to engage in this work, in all our churches something should be done to spread the truth. It is the duty of all to study the various points of our faith.” Review and Herald, April 1, 1880.
  
- ❖ “If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this Holy Mission (one-to-one ministry) their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth.” Evangelism 471.
  
- ❖ “There certainly should be a larger number of women engaged in the work of ministering to suffering humanity... When believing women shall feel the burden for souls...they will be working as Christ worked. They will consider no sacrifice too great to make to win souls to Christ.” Evangelism 465.
  
- ❖ “Intelligent Christian women may use their talents to the very highest account... wives and mothers should in no case neglect their husbands and their children, but they can do much without neglecting home duties...” Welfare Ministry, 164.

## Women's Ministries – How to Be Involved

Women are an influential force in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When women are ministered to, the family, church, and community receive the benefits of their spiritual strength and their ministry.

You are invited to become involved in a number of ways:

- Through prayer and encouragement
- By helping to see that there is an active Women's Ministries program in your church, conference/field, union and division
- By volunteering your talents and leadership abilities
- Through your financial support

Women's Ministries is involved in sponsoring and developing a number of programs and activities. Some of these are:

- International Women's Day of Prayer (First Sabbath in March)
- Women's Ministries Day (Second Sabbath in June)
- Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day (4<sup>th</sup> Sabbath in August)
- I Married a Possibility
- Literacy programs
- Prayer and Love Saves
- Global Mission projects
- Area - wide retreats, rallies and congresses
- Prayer groups and prayer chains
- Small group ministries/Bible studies
- Church hospitality
- Mentoring young girls and women
- The Widow's Mite
- Leadership Training etc

## Six critical issues

There are six critical issues that particularly impact women around the world. These issues are:

1. Illiteracy
2. Abuse
3. Poverty
4. Health risks
5. Work loads
6. Lack of mentoring and leadership training

As Christians, seeking to follow the example of Jesus, we believe that it is important to do what we can to meet the needs of all people, developing trust, and helping them to find the answer to their needs. For this reason, Women's Ministries has chosen to focus much of its attention to these challenges.

Before much can be done to address most of these needs, a person must be able to read. Almost one adult cannot read: about three-fourths of these are women. They cannot read the instructions on a medicine bottle, fill out an employment form, or read the directions for a household cleaner. Neither can they read a Sabbath School lesson to a child nor read the Bible. Like many in the Dark Ages, they must get their Gospel from someone else.

These are certainly challenges for everyone in the church. Women's Ministries invites all to join together to share the Good news of the Gospel!

Adapted from GC Women's Ministries Handbook.