

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day

June 13, 2015

“Spiritual Strength for Such a Time as This”

Written by Ella Louise Smith Simmons
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Prepared by the Department of Women's Ministries
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

General Conference
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Dear Women's Ministries Leaders:

Joyful greetings. Let me begin with a question: "Do you believe that Jesus is coming again?" I know most, if not all, of us will answer, "Yes, I do." My next question would be, "Does the way you live show the world that Jesus is coming again?"

Our packet for Women's Ministries Emphasis Day focuses on being ready for Jesus' soon return. In the sermon "Spiritual Strength for Such a Time as This" our author, Dr. Ella Louise Smith Simmons, who is currently the first woman to serve as a vice president of the General Conference, challenges us to look at the lives we live and the impact our lives are having on those around us. She also admonishes us to ensure we are dressed in the armor of God, as Paul directs in Ephesians 6.

We live in a challenging world and face daily challenges; yet through it all, our greatest challenge is living like Jesus regardless of life's circumstances. We need to be ready to share Jesus at such a time as this. We cannot fail Him. He is our Guide, Strength, Comfort, and Peace, but most importantly He is our Savior.

We send this resource to you with our prayers and love and ask that you encourage our sisters to live each day as Jesus would. To do that we must remember Paul's words to each of us, "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." Ephesians 6:11, (NASB).

Heather-Dawn Small, GCWM Director

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About the Author

Ella Louise Smith Simmons holds the distinction of being the first woman to serve as a vice president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church. Simmons was elected at the 2005 General Conference Session, held in St. Louis, Missouri.

An educator throughout her career, Simmons has served as chair for departments of education (Kentucky State University), associate dean (University of Louisville), and professor (Oakwood University, La Sierra University).

She gained administrative experience while serving as academic vice president of Oakwood University and provost and academic vice president for La Sierra University.

Simmons has been a prominent member of accreditation and corporate boards within the church and in the community. She holds a master's degree from Andrews University and a doctorate from the University of Louisville.

Simmons and her husband, Nord, a retired high school teacher, have two adult sons, Darryl and Christopher, who are also educators.

SERVICE OUTLINE
“Spiritual Strength for Such a Time as This”
Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day Packet

Call to worship:

Opening Song: “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, No. 27

Invocation: Speaker

Scripture reading: Psalm 100, NASB.

Pastoral prayer:

Call for the offering:

Offertory music:

Children’s story: “Spiritual Strength”

Special music:

Sermon: “Spiritual Strength for Such a Time as This”

Closing song: “Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, No. 462

Closing prayer:

Song of Hope: Congregation

Scripture Reading

From Psalm 100, N.A.S.B

Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!
Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, bless His name;

**Proclaim the good news of His
salvation from day to day.
Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.**

For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised;
He is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But the Lord made the heavens.

**Honor and majesty are before Him;
Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.**

Give to the Lord, O kindreds of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength.

**Give to the Lord the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.
Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Tremble before Him, all the earth.**

Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns;
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved;
He shall judge the peoples righteously."

**Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it.
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord.**

For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth.

CHILDREN'S STORY "Spiritual Strength"

Quote: *"We each have moments of spiritual power, moments of inspiration and revelation. We must sink them deep into the chambers of our souls. As we do, we prepare our spiritual home storage for moments of personal difficulty."*

- Neil L. Andersen

Lesson:

- *How do muscles help us?*

When we exercise our muscles, they become strong and we are able to do more. When we do not use them, our muscles become small and weak. Exercise helps us develop strong muscles.

We also need to grow stronger spiritually, stronger in our love for Jesus.

[Ask the children] *How can we become stronger spiritually?* [Encourage the children to suggest ideas. Here are some possibilities: By keeping our baptismal covenants, obeying our parents, praying, attending church, reading our Bibles, and so on.]

[Ask] *Why is it important to become spiritually strong?* [Possible answers: So we can avoid temptation, be guided in our decisions by the Holy Spirit, and choose to do what is right.]

We need to develop spiritual strength just as we need to develop physical strength.

There is a story in the Bible about a man with great physical strength and how he used it. His name was Samson.

Samson was called by the Lord to help free the Israelites from the Philistines. Samson's mission would require physical strength. The Lord made a covenant with Samson that as long as he obeyed the Lord, he would be physically strong. Samson was to always keep his hair long as a sign of this covenant.

Samson was so strong he killed a lion with just his hands, and he killed lots of wicked Philistines. The Philistines wanted to know how Samson had such amazing strength.

Samson really liked a girl named Delilah. One day a Philistine came to Delilah and told her that if she would find out what made Samson so strong, he would give her lots of money. Samson would not tell her the secret of his strength, but she bugged him every single day until he couldn't stand it any more. Finally he told her that the Lord had promised him he would have great strength as long as he didn't cut his hair.

That night Delilah waited until Samson was asleep and then she cut his hair off. After she did this, his strength was gone. She told the Philistines he was weak now, and they came and took him and threw him into jail.

[Ask children] *What did the Philistines offer Delilah if she would help them capture Samson?*

[Ask] *Why do you think people are sometimes tempted to do wrong for money? Would you do something bad for a lot of money? How can we avoid being tempted to do bad things for money?*

Samson's strength was not actually in his hair. His long hair was just a sign of his promise to the Lord. When Samson broke his covenant, his promise to God, the Lord took away his great physical strength.

[Ask] *Which kind of strength do you think is more important, physical or spiritual? Why?*

It is good to be strong physically, but it is much more important to be strong spiritually. Some people can't develop big muscles, but anyone who tries can develop spiritual strength.

When people become spiritually weak, they may give in to temptations, sin, or lose the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and they might not be able to do the work Jesus has for them to do—to share His love and to bless others.

We can develop the spiritual strength we need to live the way Jesus wants us to live by reading the Bible, praying, reading stories of Bible heroes, and listening in Sabbath school. If we do those things, the Lord will make us spiritually strong. When we are spiritually strong, we will be kind, helpful and unselfish, we will tell others about Jesus' love, and we will be happy.

SERMON

Spiritual Strength for Such a Time as This

Ella Louis Smith Simmons

Introduction

Why are you positioned where you are? Why do you work where you work? Why do you live where you live? Why do you go to school where you go to school? Why do you go to church where you go to church? You do what you do because God has assigned you there—and here—“for such a time as this.”

Every now and then, we find ourselves at a moment in time that might be called a “pivot point” in history. When I think of what’s happening in our culture right now and consider that we are living in the last days, I believe that we are at a strategic moment in time. You and I are here with the opportunity of a lifetime: to live a life that brings honor to God in such a time as this.

God’s Appointed Purpose for Our Lives

Our scripture lesson is from Romans the twelfth chapter. Let us read together versus 1 through 8. To make the passage more personal, we will use feminine words where the masculine words were used in the original. I will read from the New International Version:

“Therefore, I urge you, sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and prove what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: ‘Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a woman's gift is prophesying, let her use it in proportion to her faith. If it is serving, let her serve; if it is teaching, let her teach; if it is encouraging, let her encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let her give generously; if it is leadership, let her govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let her do it cheerfully.’” Romans 12:1-8

Many of you have heard of the Kentucky Derby held in Louisville, Kentucky, during the first weekend of May each year. It is a famous and widely attended horse race. It brings together people from all walks of life, including movie stars, political leaders, royalty, farmers, and factory workers. Young and old attend the Derby, some hoping to pick the Derby winner, others just to enjoy the festivities.

Among the revelry, the Derby is known for its parade of fancy hats. The women particularly get caught up in the hat mania, although many men sport fancy head gear also. If you visit Louisville during the two weeks of Derby festival, especially the culminating weekend, you will enjoy a stunning display of hats and head wear.

During a recent Derby Week, many elegant and elaborate hats adorned the ladies attending this race. Such a display may draw us to a more serious consideration. Let me explain: Adorned with their charming hats, those heads were beautiful on the outside, but what about the inside? With what had those women filled their heads? What thoughts did they entertain? What purpose motivated them? Did they make a difference to the world beyond this grand display? Were they more than just eye-candy, or did they add value to their families, neighborhoods, towns, and nations?

The Fig Tree

A New Testament story tells of the day Jesus came upon a beautiful display, in this case a tree adorned with bright foliage, promising delicious fruit. The Gospels tell us Jesus was hungry, in search of food, something to revive and sustain Himself. And so He came upon the luxuriant fig tree that was splendidly arrayed. It wore a beautiful covering of leaves of the richest green. If I had been there, I probably would have paused to gaze upon that beautifully arrayed tree—at least for a moment, to indulge in that visual feast. Surely, the Louisville ladies' hats could not rival the splendor of that fig tree.

However, just as the Lord turned my thoughts during this past Derby festival to weightier matters, matters that are more important than appearance, our Savior took a deeper look at that fig tree. He looked beyond the outward adornment to the inside, and He was disappointed with what He saw. Are we sometimes like that tree? Although there is nothing wrong with having a clean and attractive appearance, nothing wrong with wearing an attractive hat, it is much more important to have something worthwhile inside our heads. We must fill our minds with the beauty and riches of His word, the principles of His kingdom. We must be about the work that is the fulfillment of the God-appointed purpose for each of our lives.

Ellen White tells us that in the encounter between Jesus and the richly-adorned but barren fig tree there is a second, even more important lesson in this Biblical account of Jesus' hunger. She says that Jesus "represented a people hungering for fruit that they ought to have had, but did not receive from an apparently flourishing fig tree," which represents God's people—us. "Spiritual necessities were not supplied to satisfy the people for whom Christ had pledged His life to save by His grace and righteousness."

Bearing Fruit

Mrs. White goes on to say that “when the Lord is with the people who have knowledge and advantages in spiritual enlightenment, and when they impart that which they have received from God, they are fruit-bearing branches. They receive God’s rich blessing, and are producers of fruit.” “As a sure result,” she adds, “in the hand of God and under the influence of the Holy Spirit they are mighty men [and women]. Constantly they represent before the world the great goodness of God, not only in spiritual lines, but in temporal lines as well” (MS 65, 1912).

To expand on these thoughts, we find the **heart** of the Gospel message is the relief of pain and suffering and improving living conditions for those in need around the globe. As we listen to the news, we learn of the lives blighted by disease, poverty, starvation, and crime. And research tells us conditions will grow worse over the next decades. Projections are already proving accurate. For example, forecasts by the National Intelligence Council predict that:

1. While food sources should be adequate to feed the world, the number of malnourished people will increase, and many areas will experience devastating famine due to conflicts and natural disasters. Will your relationship with Jesus produce a harvest? Will your faith bear fruit? Will you help to feed these hungry people?
2. It is forecast that nearly half of the world’s population will live with water shortages or drought. Will your faith bear fruit? Will you act to provide them clean water?
3. It is predicted that AIDS and other diseases will decimate the working adult populations, leaving countless orphaned children. Will you bear fruit that will relieve their distress?
4. Sick and starving people, it is predicted, will flee into the cities, often doubling the populations of the world’s largest cities as they seek health-care, food, and shelter. Will your faith bear the fruit that will provide for them?
5. Criminal groups are expected to increase their activities—trafficking in narcotics, smuggling aliens, trafficking women and children, smuggling arms, and creating humanitarian emergencies. Will your faith bear fruit? Will you be brave enough to battle these evils?
6. Data indicate that internal conflicts will be vicious and long-lasting. Will you bear fruit? Will you have the courage to work for peace and healing?
7. They predict also that terrorism will increase worldwide, causing mass casualties. Will you bear fruit that will ease fears and bring aid to the people?

As we see these predictions coming to pass, as we observe the breakdown of family units and the increase in intolerance and hatred, we must come to see that God needs us to bear fruit for these times. Our faith, our relationships with Him must manifest itself in service.

Women of God’s Kingdom, we see evidences that we are living in the last days and that God is searching amid all stations of life for men and women who are prepared for service to this doomed world. God seeks to enlist a dedicated band of servant leaders in His cause, leaders who are not limited by race, ethnicity, social station, economic status, age, or gender.

He calls for servant leaders, those who see service as the highest calling. Look in your heart. Do you not feel that women—we and our sisters—are well suited for servant leadership?

Esther's Example

As we think of examples of servant leadership, of those whose faith bore fruit in service, let us learn from the example of Queen Esther. The Bible tells us that Esther had risen from a quiet, perhaps obscure, life to a place of prominence. She is portrayed by one commentator as a beautiful woman of clear judgment, remarkable self-control, and noble self-sacrifice.

Yes, Esther was a beautiful woman and was richly adorned no doubt, but as her story demonstrates, there was much more to Esther than attractive appearance. She possessed in head and heart the exemplary attributes of a selfless servant leader. She was intelligent, was a good listener, was a good communicator, had a pleasing personality and charisma, was sociable, was psychologically healthy, possessed a strong belief in God, had great moral strength and general courage, was secure, and held unusual sensibilities to the needs of others.

All these attributes came as gifts to Esther. The talents, characteristics and personal traits all came from God to be used in His cause. Yet, Esther probably had no idea, no clue, as to the grand purpose her life would serve. She could not tell—as could Samuel, Jeremiah, or David—of having heard God's call while she was young. She was not even expected by her peers and her people to be a leader, because she was only a woman. She was not expected to speak up at any time without being spoken to—for she was a woman; not to take a stand on any issue of importance for she had no political authority since she was only a woman. She was privileged and was not expected to even concern herself with the plight of the masses for she was a woman meant only to be a delight for the eyes of the people and an ornament on the king's arm. To those around her, her only worth was her great beauty and splendid adornment—because she was just a woman.

There is no doubt that this woman was gorgeous and impeccably clad, but Esther's great worth was more than met the eye, and when the time came, when conditions in her world had reached crisis, God sent a word, His divine call, to Queen Esther. Once she came to understand the plight of her people, through prayer and fasting Esther recognized God's call and realized her life's purpose.

The Bible tells us that Esther boldly declared that she would take up the cause, that she would initiate an intervention, and we know that she did so without concern for her personal safety. She was willing to give herself for others, even at risk of her life.

Some have defined "calling" as a divine summons. When you get a summons to appear in court, you do not decline the invitation. Esther answered God's call, the divine summons, with an unhesitating and resolute "Yes, Lord." Her actions demonstrated that although she knew that while God could save His people through other means, He had chosen her as His instrument. She alone was called to fulfill God's plan for His people.

Esther knew also that if God called her He would sustain her, in life or in death. Yet she still had to exercise great faith because, as for most of us, God had not revealed to her the outcome of her actions. She did not know whether she would perish or be victorious in the confrontation with evil. She simply knew what God wanted her to do, and that was sufficient. Like Gideon, Esther had begun life as the least of the least, but she had allowed God to transform her by His grace and to use her in extraordinary service for God's people.

Our people—our families, our neighbors, our church members, our fellow citizens, our brothers and sisters—have been targeted by Satan for annihilation. God calls once again for women who have been prepared, women who have something under those beautiful hats and stylish hairdos, women who will hear His call and realize that they were brought into God's kingdom for such a time as this. Now that we have been transformed day by day by God's grace, God wants to achieve another transformation in us—one that results in service to others. He looks for a faith that will bear fruit.

God calls women who will give all, who will answer His call to servant leadership. Through His gift of grace God calls us today to take up His cause, our church calls us to greater service to humanity, and the world calls us to care. Further, this church will not be most efficient and effective in achieving its purpose until it draws upon the full array of talents and gifts that God has placed within its body. Men and women, young and old, are called by God to fulfill the purposes for which they were born. The Church will not be triumphant until women everywhere are free to fulfill the purposes for which they were born.

Each of us has a responsibility. We must rise up and come out, not to upset the church or the world or to overthrow established structures, but we must arise from our places of privilege, emerge from our comfortable zones of labor and take up our crosses in servant leadership, willing to suffer pain, frustration, fatigue, and in some instances face death for the cause of God in service to a challenged church and a doomed world.

Now and in the years to come the world needs servants who will go beyond what it has known in the past. As predictions indicate, past actions will not be sufficient for the times to come. We who are here at this time in history have been chosen to take up the mantle of servant leadership, the cloak of service. No matter what we have accomplished in the past, we have a much greater work to do—today and in the future. Listen what Ellen White says: "We may do a noble work for God if we will. Woman does not know her power.... 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, p. 642

We are gathered at this special meeting to receive guidance from our heavenly Leader. We are all dressed up, looking the part, but are we truly prepared for such a time as this in the world?

The Right Dress

In Louisville and most of the southern United States, people are very concerned with dressing properly for the occasion. We as Christian women must be concerned also, but not in ways we have been in the past, measuring skirt lengths and color intensity. Someone has said that we should have our war clothes on, for in offering our service to a wicked world we will wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with the supernatural powers of spiritual darkness. As we go forth, we must be clad in the whole armor of God. That is how I want to be dressed today. I want my clothes to be hand-tailored by the Holy Spirit, and I want Ephesians 6 to be my designer label. When we have that we can be adorned like Queen Esther.

Esther wore the finest fabrics in her long flowing skirts, but also was wrapped about with the truth. Her skirts were complimented by the most delicate and elaborate tops, but also she was fitted with the breastplate of righteousness. Esther wore the finest, most stylish shoes of her day and probably had a closet full of hand-crafted footwear, but more importantly her feet were shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and although she carried a most dainty fan in her hand, she surely carried the shield of faith. Then to complete her outfits, Esther's head adornments were always elegant. Yet over them all she wore the helmet of salvation. And while Esther must have carried exquisite handbags of the most precious stones and metals, we know she wielded the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Yes, it is important to be dressed properly for the occasion. Are you dressed for the occasion? Are you wearing your Ephesians 6 designer attire as you march forward to greater service? Such attire requires daily attention, you know, and is quite costly. How then can we as ordinary women of limited means and influence achieve and maintain that standard of dress?

Conclusion

Writing about Paul's message in Romans 12, Ellen White says (and again I will substitute feminine language for the masculine):

"Woman, fallen, woman, may be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that she can 'prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.' How does she prove this? By the Holy Spirit taking possession of her mind, spirit, heart, and character. Where does the proving come in?" Ellen White says, "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."* (Surely she penned this for women!)

"A real work," she says, "is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the human character, and its fruits are seen. Just as a good tree will bear fruit, so will the tree that is actually planted in the Lord's garden produce good fruit unto eternal life." She assures us that an entire transformation will take place in our lives. Though such a transformation may seem expensive, it is really free! It is God's gift to us. Let us hasten, therefore, to say with Isaiah, "I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send, and who will go [in service] for us? And we said, here I am Lord; I am dressed and ready to [serve], send me."

God created you for a divine appointment—a unique role to fulfill in your life—just like Esther! There is something you can do for God that no one else can do—a God-given niche only you can fill.

May God bless each one of us as we act to fulfill our life's purpose through service for such a time as this.

**Our High Calling, p. 106*

SEMINAR
SPIRITUAL BEAUTY:
Depend on the Word in Such a Time as This
By Dorothy Watts

GROUP WORK: ASSIGNMENT # 1

Note to Presenter: *Some time before this meeting, pass out brown lunch bags to all the women. Instruct them to put an object in the bag that will illustrate something that God does for them. They are to tell no one what they put into the bag, but they should bring it to this meeting. At this meeting, ask them to form groups of eight, nine, or ten, but no more than ten. The youngest person begins first. One at a time they will take out their object and explain in two or three sentences how it illustrates God's working in their lives.*

Introduction

Five-year-old Billy listened to his mom and dad discuss a perplexing problem. "Whatever are we going to do?" sighed Mother.

"I don't know." Father shook his head, worry lines wrinkling his forehead. "I don't know where else to go for help."

"Why don't you ask Harold to help?" Billy asked.

"Harold?" Father replied. "Who's Harold? I don't know any Harold."

"You know," Billy said. "Our Father which art in heaven, Harold be thy name."

How often I have been like Billy's mom and dad, worrying, fretting, stewing, not knowing where to turn next, when all I needed to do was "Ask Harold." All I needed to do was to turn to the one on whom we can always depend—Jesus Christ, the Living Word—and the Bible, His written Word.

We can depend on the Word!

Today we will take the letters of the word "depend" and use it as an acrostic to talk about some of the areas of our lives where we need to depend on the Word.

D - Direction: Psalm 119:105 (Have someone read it).

Let me share a time when I depended on the Word for direction in my life. **(Tell a story of your own, or share the following experience).**

It happened when Ron and Dorothy Watts were missionaries in India. They had come home for three months to visit relatives and try to find a baby to adopt. It was now mid-August and they were scheduled to go back the first week of September. Ron was filling speaking appointments in California while Dorothy visited her mother in Ohio.

Ron phoned one evening to tell Dorothy that newborn twin boys were available for adoption. They could have them, but they would have to take up residence in California for one year to complete the adoption proceedings. Ron asked her to join him in prayer for one day to find out God's will for them in this matter.

Dorothy prayed long that night, but no answer came. She prayed again the next morning, but there was no answer.

Then the mailman came with several books that she had ordered on the ABC's of Bible Prayer by Glenn Coon. She opened them and discovered how to claim the promises and know for sure her prayer was answered. It was as easy as ABC.

A - ASK. "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Ask for something God has already promised to give you. Find one of the 3,573 promises of Scripture, one that promises something you need.

B - BELIEVE. "Whatsoever things ye ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive." Believe that God keeps His Word. Believe that He is dependable, that He will not lie. Believe that with Him all things are possible and He will do as He has promised.

C - CLAIM. Claim the promise as your own. Kneel with the Bible open to the promise. Put your finger on the verse and read it back to God. Say, "God, You said it and I believe it. I now claim that promise and ask You to do what You promised to do. And I thank You now for doing it. I believe You are already doing what You have promised to do. Thank you!"

Now all Dorothy needed was to find one of those 3,573 promises that said, "The Watts shall adopt twin boys from California." It was not there.

But she did find one in James 1:5 that said, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

She knelt and, placing her finger on the promise, she prayed: "Dear God, you have promised here to give me wisdom if I will only ask. I'm asking. Please give me wisdom about

Your will concerning this adoption. Shall we stay for a year to adopt them, or shall we forget it and return to India immediately?"

At that moment the word "car" popped into her head and she thought of the car they had been using for three months. If they were going back to India, they needed to sell it quickly. If they were staying for a year, they would need the car. They had tried to sell the car before Ron left for California, but no one had answered their advertisement.

Maybe that is why it did not sell! Dorothy thought. *Of course! God knew about this adoption and that we'd have to stay and we would need a car!* "Lord, is this the answer?" she prayed. "Is this what You have in mind for us? Should we keep the car and adopt the babies?"

She was still on her knees when the phone rang. She answered it and a lady said, "Do you have a car for sale?"

Dorothy was amazed. This was incredible. The car wasn't even advertised! How did she know?

"Yes, but it is not in very good condition," Dorothy replied. "You might not want to buy it. I think there's something wrong with the clutch, and the carburetor, and the starter, and maybe the brakes. I'm not sure what all." You can see how she wanted things to turn out!

"My dad is a mechanic," the caller replied. "May we come over and look at it now?"

Within 15 minutes they were there. They drove the car around the block. He looked under the hood and checked this and that. "Nothing much wrong I can't fix," he said. "How much do you want for it?"

The Watts had bought the car for \$850. Ron said they would be lucky to get \$600 for it, but that they would just have to take anything they could get. Dorothy did not want that car to sell. Although they had paid only \$850 for it, she said, "\$925."

"We'll take it," the man said. They wrote a check on the spot. The car was gone and Dorothy had no doubt about what they should do. They returned to India where the Lord gave them three beautiful Indian children, now grown, and five grandchildren.

GROUP WORK: ASSIGNMENT # 2

Note to Presenter: Ask the women to share in groups of three or four about a time when God met their physical, mental, social, or emotional needs. Perhaps one or two could share about a time when God gave them the wisdom or direction when they needed it. Allow 3 minutes for sharing.

E - Emotional Needs: *Philippians 4:19* (*Have someone read it*).

Minirth and Meier list 12 basic needs that we all share. Air, food, water, mental stimulation, sex, love, self worth, power, assertiveness, comfort, security, and relief from psychic tension. The first three are physical needs for survival. The rest are mental or emotional needs.

God wants to meet all of these needs for you, emotional as well as physical. Here is a promise you can claim. "My God shall supply all of your needs." You can depend on the Word to supply your emotional needs.

(Share a personal experience of when God met your emotional needs for a friend, for comfort, for strength, or any other emotional need. Or you may use the following story).

Soon after Dorothy Watts moved from Oregon to Michigan, she was alone for a weekend. On Friday evening, she sat at the piano playing old familiar hymns. When she came to "I Want My Friends to Pray for Me," tears filled her eyes, and she couldn't see to play through to the end of the piece.

"Oh, God," she sobbed. "I don't have even one friend in this new place to pray for me. Please, Lord, I need a friend! I'm so lonely!"

The next day, she opened the mailbox to find a card from Muriel, a woman at a nearby church where Dorothy's husband had preached. They had shared lunch and the afternoon with her family. The card said, "I feel impressed to write you a note and let you know that I am praying for you. I would like to be your friend."

God supplied Dorothy's emotional need for a friend. And you can depend on Him to supply all your emotional needs as well.

Joni Earekson Tada is another example of someone who found that God met her emotional needs. She has been a quadriplegic since the age of 17 due to a diving accident. Life has been difficult for Joni, as she has to be totally dependent on others. However, through this she has learned to totally depend on God and His Word for her emotional needs.

She writes, "This morning I knocked over a huge pile of dictation with my wheelchair and I felt so clumsy. I just felt so handicapped. At times like that when a wave of emotion threatens to swallow me, I've trained myself to hold on to some objective anchors from God's Word, like 'Put your hope in God for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God' (*Psalms 42:5*). It's especially helpful on those 'Oh, I wish I had my hands, days.'"

Yes, we can depend on God's Word to meet our emotional needs.

P - Physical Needs: Matthew 6:28-33. (Have someone read it).

(Share a personal story about when God kept His promise to you and met your physical need for food, clothing, shelter, and money to pay bills, etc. Or share the following story).

Dorothy Watts experienced the truth of this promise when she was a young pastor's wife. She was not working so she had to spend a good deal of time trying to make the budget stretch to cover basic expenses. There was nothing for new clothes.

One morning her husband found her sitting on the bed crying. "What's wrong?" Ron asked.

"I don't have anything to wear that fits me anymore," she cried. She held up a dress for her husband to see. He could tell she had gained weight and there was no way the dress would fit. He laughed. "Well, the Lord has sure looked after us well, hasn't He?"

But Dorothy really did have a problem. She was a pastor's wife and she needed to look decent on Sabbath morning. She prayed, "Dear God, please, I need a new Sabbath dress. I want to look respectable, but I don't have any money. I don't know what to do. This is your problem now, Lord. Help me."

She heard no audible voice, but she did receive a definite impression that she should go downtown and buy a dress.

"But Lord, I have no money, and Ron and I have agreed that I wouldn't buy things on our charge card," she countered.

"Come on, Dorothy," it seemed God was saying to her. "You leave the money to me."

So she caught the next bus and found herself walking the street looking in shop windows at dresses she had no money to buy. She hadn't walked a full block when she met a friend coming from the opposite direction. "Where are you going?" her friend asked.

"To look for a Sabbath dress," Dorothy replied.

"Now isn't that interesting," the friend beamed. "I had just come down to buy you a special gift to thank you for all you have done. Come. Let me buy your dress for you!"

You can depend on God's Word to supply your physical needs, even needs as small as vitamin drops.

In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom tells how she depended on God to supply vitamin drops.

Corrie had smuggled a small bottle of vitamin drops into the prisoner of war camp to help her sister Betsy who was not well. At one point Betsy was desperately ill, and this small bottle of drops was the only medicine Corrie had to help. Of course, many others were sick and needed it just as much as Betsy, but Corrie didn't want to share. However, Betsy insisted. Miraculously, there were always enough drops for those in need, and Betsy always got hers as well.

The bottle was dark and Corrie couldn't see how much was left, but she simply prayed and asked God to let it last as long as it was needed. It seemed to go on and on like the widow's cruse of oil. At last Corrie got a sympathetic guard to get another bottle of vitamins. However, she didn't want to waste any of the first bottle, so she went to finish it up before opening the new one. To her amazement, it was empty. There was not one drop left. God had been faithful in meeting each day's need.

My God shall supply all your needs. Depend on the Word!

GROUP WORK: ASSIGNMENT # 3

Note to the Presenter: Ask the women to work together in groups of three or four. Ask half of the groups to begin at the top on page 29 and work down. Ask the other half to begin at the bottom and work up. Get them to think of two Bible women who depended on the Word of God to meet that particular need. What was the situation when that need was met? After four or five minutes, get responses from the groups for the different areas listed on page 29.

E - Eternal Needs: 1 Peter 2:2. (Ask someone to read it).

The Word of God is our means of Salvation, for it points to the Living Word who died that we might live. It is what we need to continue to grow spiritually, to change and grow and become what God wants us to be.

Kay James, a US government leader, knows you can depend on the Word for your eternal needs.

She was a senior in high school. Her family was not religious, but she was sitting at the dinner table one night watching a Billy Graham crusade on TV. It was youth night, and Billy Graham was giving a challenge. She listened to what he was saying, then went back to her bedroom and prayed.

"God, Billy Graham says you are there. I don't know if You are or not, but I'm going to give it a shot. I don't like the way my life is going. I have too many problems, and I can't figure them all out, so I'm going to give my life to You. If I don't like what You do with it, I'm going to take it all back, but You've got a year."

She searched the house and came up with a King James New Testament and began reading in Matthew. She couldn't understand it, but kept going because she had made a promise. She finished Matthew and started Mark and decided this was the dumbest book she had ever read. It was beginning to repeat itself.

Still, Kay was determined to give it a try, and already she sensed that something was happening inside of her that she couldn't quite understand. Looking back, she realizes that the power of the Holy Spirit was in that book. By the time the year was up, she had given her life to God completely. She had accepted His salvation and was growing daily through the reading of the Word.

Petra Sukow was a Nazi youth worker who attended George Vandeman's evangelistic meetings in London. She was an agnostic, but Elder Vandeman challenged her to spend 15 minutes a day with the Word to see for herself what it could do for her life. In her characteristic fashion of wanting always to do her best, Petra began spending, not 15 minutes but an hour a day with the Bible. Of course she found Jesus, believed, was born again, and became a worker for Him.

You can't help but find Christ, salvation, and Christian growth when you spend time with the Word. It is guaranteed to change your life for eternity if you give it a chance.

You can depend on the Word for your eternal needs.

N - Need for meaning in life: Psalm 119:104. (Let someone read it)

We can depend on God's Word to give us an understanding of the great scheme of things, God's plan for the universe, the cause of pain and suffering, God's purpose for our lives, His purpose for us in trials and difficulties. If we will spend time with His Word, we will find answers for all the hard questions of life. We will find purpose and meaning and a reason for our existence. We will find a reason to live in spite of all the hardships and handicaps we may face.

On December 8, 1941, the day after the Pearl Harbor bombing, a Japanese war ship steamed down the Whangpo River in Shanghai, China, where Fay Anderson, then twelve years old, lived with her family. Her father was a British military officer, away from home at the time on military duty.

Fay and her mother were among 600 prisoners of war sent to a concentration camp at Yangchow, near Chingiang. The two of them shared a 6 by 5 foot space alongside 60 other women in one large dormitory room.

From ages 13 to 16 Fay struggled to find some meaning to life in that concentration camp. Lying on her mosquito-netted cot, the only place for privacy in the compound, she pondered the meaning of life: Why war, why suffering, and why all the difficulties and inhumanities of man to man? She saw so much cruelty in the camp that she became hard and bitter.

She says, "I was angry at God. I was resentful. My childhood sweetness and faith were washed away by the terrible prisoner of war experience."

Furiously, she shook a fist at the heavens. "Where are you, God?" she cried. "Why do you allow such things to happen?"

Not long after that in the chow line, Faye met D. J. Watson, a missionary, who invited her to his Bible class. Faye had heard Bible stories before, but she says she never remembered seeing an open Bible. She had never read a word of Scripture for herself.

Fay's experience studying the Word brought meaning and purpose into life for the first time. She began to understand God's purpose for the world and for her life. She discovered in the Word a personal God, a Father God, a friend God, a God who would dwell with her forever.

She writes, "I sobbed out my broken rebellion on D. J.'s shoulder. We knelt in the grass and the hand of the Almighty reached down and He wrapped himself around my life." Through God's Word, Faye found hope, purpose, and meaning for her life.

You can depend on God's Word for meaning and purpose.

D - Defense Against Satan: Psalm 119:11. (Have someone read it).

Elizabeth Mittelstaedt of Frankfurt knows that there is power in the Word to overcome the forces of evil that would destroy our lives.

As a result of a routine dental procedure, Elizabeth suffered severe nerve and jaw damage that left her in constant pain. But out of her pain was born a miraculous story.

A few months after her prognosis, Elizabeth was in despair over her physical condition and her inability to have children. One day while walking across a bridge near Frankfurt, she looked down into the water, saw the rocks, and wanted to jump.

A voice said to her, "Why don't you just jump?" She looked again at the water and thought, *This isn't deep enough to end my life.* And the voice came back taunting her, "Don't worry. Jump. There is a stone. You'll hit your head. It will put an end to your misery. Jump."

Suddenly she realized it was Satan speaking to her, urging her to end her life. At that moment she remembered the verse in Matthew 4 where Jesus was standing on the pinnacle of the temple and the same devil had told Him to jump. Because Jesus had not given in to Satan, she realized she didn't have to either.

Aloud she spoke, "No! I am not going to jump. I am going to trust God." She began to cry then, pouring out her heart to God. "Lord, I'm so afraid of living in pain for the rest of my life. I don't think I can handle it."

The Lord brought to her mind another scripture she had learned, "Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

She thought, "The Lord says I'm not to worry about tomorrow. He'll give me strength for one day at a time. Today I will not be afraid. Somehow I will make it through today."

At that moment, she looked out over her town and saw the beautiful steeples, the fairytale homes with window boxes loaded with flowers, and whitewashed picket fences and clean-swept sidewalks. But behind the locked gates and stylish clothes she knew there was the pain of thousands of women caused by broken marriages, depression, guilt, and crushed hopes.

Elizabeth felt the Lord say to her, "These women feel like you do today. They want to give up, but their pain is different—it's emotional." Suddenly she wanted to encourage them. That morning, standing on the bridge, she got the idea of starting a women's magazine to help women of Germany know God.

Satan comes to all of us in many disguises, discouraging us with pain, depression, discouragement and despair, or with temptations of worldly wealth, power, and fortune, or

perhaps with the excitement of an extramarital affair. He doesn't care how he gets us, as long as he does. He knows us each well. He knows our temperaments and our weak points.

I don't know what your weak points are, but this much I do know: you can depend on God's Word to help you overcome the evil one and anything he throws your way.

Our only safety is in the Word of God and in prayer. These are our only defenses against the evil one.

Can you think of some Bible women who found the Word of God dependable?

Group Work: Assignment # 4

Note to Presenter: Ask the group to read Genesis 21:9-20 round robin style. Ask them to put themselves in the place of each woman and try to imagine the emotions that they experienced and the needs they had at that time in life. Then ask them to discuss the following questions:

Sarah:

- 1) What emotions did she have?
- 2) What were her needs?
- 3) What lessons do Sarah's experiences have for Christian women today?

Hagar:

- 1) What emotions did she have?
- 2) What were her needs?
- 3) What lessons do Hagar's experiences have for Christian women today?

From the stories of these two women, I have discovered four Biblical principles for Christian Women today.

1. God understands our feelings, our hopes, our fears, and all our needs.

That encourages me. Jesus notices our tears of loneliness when we have been rejected. He understands our fears when we don't know where the rent for next month is coming from. He understands the fierce temptations Satan sends our way. He knows our weaknesses, our struggles, our problems, and our perplexities.

"His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for him to notice. There is no chapter of our experience too dark for Him to read. No calamity can befall the least of

His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips of which our heavenly father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest." (*Steps to Christ*, p. 100)

2. God wants to meet all our needs: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual.

He is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think. He can give a child to a woman in her old age, and he can provide water in the desert. He can care for the needs of the single woman such as Hagar or the married woman such as Sarah.

3. God's Word is dependable. He will do what He says He will do. His promises are sure.

Sarah laughed when she was told she would have a son in her old age. It was impossible. But with God all things are possible. He has a thousand ways to supply our needs of which we know nothing. When He says He will do something, He will. We can trust His Word.

4. Contact with God transforms our lives, our outlook, our future, our circumstances, and our emotions.

Did you notice how things changed for Sarah and Hagar when they made contact with God? It is always true, when we meet the Living Word in His Written Word.

Power in God's Word

Bianca Rothchild had every reason to be bitter. In 1939, just before her sixteenth birthday, war broke out in Poland. Six years later, she was the only one left alive from her extended family of 43. All had died in concentration camps.

Bianca suffered much at the hands of her captors: broken ribs, a broken wrist, a mangled leg, and a back damaged when a guard stomped on her with his heavy boots. Today she still wears a brace from that beating.

After the soldier stomped on her, Bianca ran outside during an air raid, looked up at the sky, and cried out, "Oh, God, please let a bomb fall on this camp to put me out of my misery."

When she survived the injuries, she began to wonder what purpose God had for her life. Back inside the barracks, she opened a book and read, "We have a right to the joy of giving so others may receive. We can give material things, and we can give moral support. We can give a friendly ear, and best of all, we can give love."

Bianca realized she had two choices. She could spend the rest of her life feeling sorry for herself, harboring a spirit of hate and bitterness, or she could choose the way of love and kindness, looking away from herself to the needs of others.

That night she made contact with the Living Word. "Dear God," she prayed. "Help me through this terrible ordeal, and I vow to give myself in a true and loving spirit."

After the war, she immigrated to the U.S. where she ended up living in a condo. It was there she found a special way to love.

Most of the residents are elderly and often need a little bit of sunshine. Whenever anyone is in the hospital or laid up at home, Bianca sends a cheery get-well card. Each one she signs, "The Sunshine Lady." Over the years dozens of people have received a card from this woman with the sunny temperament.

A neighbor commented, "There's something wrong with her back, but it never seems to have any effect on her happy disposition."

They don't know about her battle with bitterness and despair that night in the concentration camp. They see only the results of her contact with God, the results of her dependence on the Word.

Christina spent the night with Auntie. They spent the evening doing their favorite things. But like most five-year-olds, when it was time for bed she manufactured many reasons to prolong the inevitable.

She had a bath, listened to a story, had a drink, and got up to go to the potty. Next she announced that she was afraid of the dark. So Auntie scurried around to find a night-light.

"Now you can go to sleep," Auntie said, and left the room to attend to other chores. Soon she heard Christina's voice calling her again. "I'm still scared," she said. "Can't you come to bed with me?"

"I can't come to bed now," Auntie said. "There's too much to do. Anyway, you shouldn't be afraid. We prayed and asked Jesus to send the angels to look after you. Jesus is taking good care of you."

Imagine Auntie's shock and dismay when Christina retorted, "Hmmp! Jesus can't even take care of Himself!"

"What do you mean by that?" Auntie asked.

"Well, He's just a little baby," Christina explained.

"No, He's not!" Auntie exclaimed.

"Yes, He is," Christina insisted. "My teacher said so and that He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

Auntie quickly assured her that although Jesus was once a baby a long time ago, He is now all grown up, big and strong, and truly able to take care of her.

Christina smiled as the truth dawned on her. "I'm glad He's big enough," she said.

Ah, yes, Christina, I, too, am glad He's big enough. That which God has promised in His Word, He is big enough to do! You can depend on the Word!

DEPEND ON THE WORD

AREAS IN WHICH WE NEED TO DEPEND ON THE WORD

Direction

Psalm 119:105

- 1.
 - 2.
-

Emotional Needs

Philippians 4:19

- 1.
 - 2.
-

Physical Needs

- 1.
- 2.

Matthew 6:28-33

Eternal Needs

2 timothy 3:15

- 1.
- 2.

1 Peter 2:2

Need for Meaning

Psalm 119:104

- 1.
 - 2.
-

Defense against Satan

Psalm 119:11

- 1.
- 2.

FOUR BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMEN

A. ***God understands our feelings, our hopes, our fears, and all our needs. (Hebrews 4:15)***

“His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter of our experience too dark for Him to read. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest.” *Steps to Christ*, p. 100.

B. ***God wants to meet all our needs: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual. (Philippians 4:19)***

“He bids them seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and His promise is that all things needful to them for this life shall be added. Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing.” *Desire of Ages*, p. 330.

C. ***God's Word is dependable. He will do what He says He will do. His promises are sure. (Numbers 23:19)***

“The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we ask for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers.....When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular things that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, ‘Ask and it shall be given you.’” *Steps to Christ*, p. 96.

D. ***Contact with God transforms our lives, our outlook, our future, our circumstances, and our emotions. (Isaiah 61:3)***

Did you notice how things changed for Sarah and Hagar when they made contact with God? It is always true, when we meet the Living Word in His Written Word.



HISTORY OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES Seventh –day Adventist Church

What is the history of Women's Ministries?

- History of Women's Ministries in the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- History of the North American Division Women's Ministries
- Beginnings of Women's Ministries in other Divisions

A Brief Historical Background of Women's Ministries in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

For inter-divisional Women's Ministries directors, and others interested in how women have ministered within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the following data presents a picture of the course of history of Women's Ministries from 1844 until 2005.

A thoughtful study of the recommendations and actions taken will give an overview of what is expected from Women's Ministries officers by the members of the church body.

The carefully researched material offered here has been condensed from two articles presented in December 1990 and February 1991 by Kit Watts, assistant editor of the *Adventist Review*.

December 1844, Ellen Gould Harmon receives her first vision as she and four young women pray together in Portland, Maine, USA. Ellen's ministry lasts until her death in 1915.

October 1874, Mrs. Henry Gardner, a member of Battle Creek prayer band, leading to formation of Dorcas & Benevolent Association.

1874, Mrs. S. M. I. Henry, superintendent of the National Department of Evangelistic Work for the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

1896, S.M.I. Henry enters Battle Creek Sanitarium, later becoming a Seventh-day Adventist.

1898, Mrs. Henry corresponds with EGW and outlines "women's ministries." Granted ministerial license from GC and became the first Women's Ministries Director for the General Conference. Writes 4-page supplement in R&H December 6, 1898.

1899, Mrs. Henry publishes weekly column in the *Review* headlined "Woman's Gospel Work," filled with Bible studies, poetry, letters, and practical advice. She traveled across the United States, speaking tirelessly.

January 16, 1900, S. M. I. Henry dies; 9-member committee works for a time; women's column disappears from R&H in June 1901.

July 16, 1915, death of Ellen G. White.

September 1973, First "Role of Women in the Church" committee meets at Camp Mohaven, Ohio.

April 1980, N. C. Wilson, President of the General Conference at the GC Session in Dallas, said the church must find ways to organize and use the vast potential represented by women's talents.

1983, North American Division Women's Commission founded through the Office of Human Relations.

March 1985, Commission on the Role of Women meets. Includes delegates from world field. Recommends an affirmative action plan be developed to improve women's involvement in the church.

July 1985, GC Session in New Orleans votes "affirmative action" for the involvement of women in the work of the church be a priority plan with church leadership, and to request leaders to use their executive influence to open to women all aspects of ministry in the church that do not require ordination.

October 15, 1985, the GC Committee establishes Women's Ministries Advisory, Betty Holbrook, chairperson.

March 1988, new commission on the Role of Women meets again. Recommends more study. GC Women's Ministries Advisory drafts proposal for President Neal Wilson outlining full-time position for a Women's Ministries director.

April 1988, Karen Flowers appointed chairperson of GC-WMA.

August 1988, with Karen Flowers as Head of the Advisory Committee, they formulate a Mission Statement for Women's Ministries.

October 13, 1988, "Gender Gap," an editorial in the Adventist Review, commends the Oregon Conference for establishing a Women's Ministries Department. Proposes such a ministry worldwide.

March 16, 1989, "Forgotten Heritage," an editorial in the Adventist Review, summarizes the work of S. M. I. Henry, and calls for re-establishment of women's ministries.

March 19, 1989, Summit for leaders of nine SDA women's groups meet at invitation of NAD Women's Commission. Voted: to call for a full-time Women's Ministries director at the GC and NAD level.

July 12-17, 1989, Commission on International Role of Women meets in Cohutta Springs, Georgia; Karen Flowers presents WMA study on women in leadership throughout the world field. The 17

women members caucus and recommend a women's ministries office.

July 13, 1989, Karen Flowers, WMA Chair, presents the findings of "The Role of Women in the Church: An International Survey of Seventh-day Adventist Women in Leadership." This 57-page document presents a profile of 875 respondents from all divisions of the worldwide church and summarizes their concerns.

July 17, 1989, The 17 women members of the Commission on the Role of Women in the Church in caucus state: We recommend the employment of Women's Ministries coordinators to coordinate ministries for all Adventist women, both lay and denominational employees. (A) Full time at GC and division levels. (B) At least half-time at unions and conferences.

July 23, 1989, NAD Women's Commission (Camp Hope, British Columbia, Canada). The commissioners come from each union in North America, and vote to affirm the above recommendations, especially emphasizing that their division elect a director for Women's Ministries.

November, 1989, Dr. Ramona Perez Greek is appointed chair of the North American Division Women's Commission.

June 12, 1990, Karen Flowers, GC-WMA Chair, introduces the proposal for full-time women's ministries director to GC officers. No action was taken at this time.

July 5-15, 1990, the GC Women's Ministries Advisory sponsors booth at the GC Session, Indianapolis. A fabric wall-hanging depicting Adventist women serving Christ in every division of the world is used. It will soon be displayed at GC headquarters. Women's Ministries was not discussed at this GC session.

July 12, 1990, President's Honor Roll, initiated by Karen Flowers, WMA Chair, and Neal C. Wilson. Each division president selects a woman who supports the church with outstanding contributions to represent the Adventist women throughout his division.

September 24, 1990, 35 women representing various groups met in Pennsylvania asking the church to appoint a full-time Director of Women's Ministries at all levels. Duties to include identifying, assessing, and developing strategies to meet women's needs; generating and disseminating accurate information concerning the role of women in the Church; sponsoring retreats for the purpose of spiritual nourishment; directing activities to educate women regarding church governance and policies. At the GC level, this person should be a Field Secretary. At all levels this position should be fully funded, with travel budget, and budget to cover research, publications, translations, materials, and meetings.

September 1990, Elizabeth Sterndale is elected by NADCOM/GCC committee as a Field Secretary for the North American Division and accorded officer status as coordinator of NAD Women's Ministries.

October 4, 1990, Annual Council accepts GC President Robert Folkenberg's recommendation:

WHEREAS, Everyone needs affirmation of personal worth and the value the Church places on the individual's gifts and contributions; and

WHEREAS, Women represent a vast storehouse of spiritual gifts which await full development and utilization in the accomplishment of the Church's global mission; and

WHEREAS, Open dialogue bringing women's perspectives to leadership will bring greater balance and wholeness to decision making; and

WHEREAS, Women need to be nurtured spiritually, their unique needs addressed, and guided toward Christian service; it was

RECOMMENDED:

1 To authorize the establishment of an Office of Women's Ministries at the General Conference to foster ministry by women to women in the world church. This individual will report to the President. (This position will involve an existing budget, not an additional one.)

2 To request each division to identify its degree of need for Women's Ministries and find the best way to meet this need.

October 5, 1990, Rose Otis is elected first Director, Office of Women's Ministries, General Conference.

July, 1995, the General Conference in Session votes full department status to Women's Ministries.

July, 1995, Rose Otis is elected Director, Department of Women's Ministries, General Conference.

October, 1995, Ardis Stenbakken is appointed Associate Director, Department of Women's Ministries, General Conference.

December, 1996, Dorothy Eaton Watts is elected Director, Department of Women's Ministries, General Conference.

October 6, 1997, Annual Council elected Ardis Dick Stenbakken Director, Department of Women's Ministries, General Conference.

April, 1998, Lynnetta Siagian Hamstra elected as Associate Director, Department of Women's Ministries, General Conference.

2001-2005 Heather-Dawn Small is elected as Associate Director, Department of Women's

Ministries, General Conference.

2004, Ardis Stenbakken retires at the end of 2004

July, 2005, Heather-Dawn Small is elected Director of Women's Ministries

July, 2005, Raquel Queiroz da Costa Arrais elected as Associate Director

**General Conference Women's Ministries Handbook.*