



# Mission Statement. . .

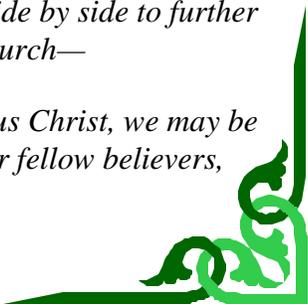
*General Conference Department of Women's Ministries*

*The Department of Women's Ministries exists to uphold, encourage, and challenge Adventist women in their pilgrimage as disciples of Jesus Christ and members of His world church.*

*Our mission is in the larger sense common to all Christians—that of uplifting Christ in the church and in the world. But more specifically, we are called to:*

- *elevate women as persons of inestimable worth because they have been created and redeemed*
- *enable women to deepen their faith and experience spiritual growth and renewal*
- *build networks among women in the world church to encourage bonds of friendship and mutual support and the creative exchange of ideas and information*
- *mentor young Adventist women, encouraging their involvement, and creating paths for them as they reach for their potential in Christ*
- *address the concerns of women in a global context*
- *bring women's unique perspectives to the issues facing the world church*
- *seek expanding avenues of dynamic Christian service for women*
- *challenge each Adventist woman with her potential to complement the gifts given to other women and men as they work side by side to further the global mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—*

*that out of the fullness we as women have personally found in Jesus Christ, we may be empowered to share the good news within our families, among our fellow believers, and in ever expanding circles in the unsaved world.*



# Department of Women's Ministries

## Church Manual Statement

Women's Ministries exists to uphold, encourage, and challenge Seventh-day Adventist women in their daily walk as disciples of Jesus Christ and as members of His World Church. The mission of Women's Ministries is, in the larger sense, common to all Christians—that of uplifting Christ in the church and in the world. In doing this, the ministry seeks to:

1. Foster spiritual growth and renewal among women;
2. Affirm that women are of inestimable worth by virtue of their creation and redemption, and to equip them for service in the church;
3. Minister to the broad spectrum of women's needs across the life span being sensitive to multi-cultural and multiethnic perspectives;
4. Liaise and cooperate with other specialized departments of the church to facilitate the ministry to women and of women;
5. Build goodwill among women in the World Church that encourages bonds of friendship, mutual support, and the creative exchange of ideas and information;
6. Mentor and encourage Seventh-day Adventist women, creating paths for their involvement in the church as they reach for their potential in Christ;
7. Find ways and means to challenge each Seventh-day Adventist woman to use her gifts to complement the talents of others as they work side by side to further the global mission of the Church.

**Women's Ministries Leader**—The Women's Ministries leader is elected by the church to develop specific ministries, to foster specific ministries, to nurture women, and to equip them for service to God and to the church. She serves as Chair of the Women's Ministries Committee, encouraging ideas and plans which maximize women's contributions to the mission of the Church. As Chair, she is responsible for putting together the agenda, moderating discussion, and developing group cohesion through personal sharing, prayer, and fellowship.

She also serves as a member of the church board, integrating activities and programs for women into the larger church program. It is her responsibility to keep the

church informed of the contribution of Women's Ministries to church life. The leader's liaison for training and resource material is the local conference/mission Women's Ministries Director.

**Qualifications of the Women's Ministries Leader**—The Women's Ministries leader should be a woman with a sensitive, caring nature, a burden for women's ministry and concerns, a balance in her perspectives so as to represent a broad spectrum of women, and an ability to encourage other women to cultivate their spiritual gifts. She should be able to work well with the women in the church, the pastor, and the church board.

**The Women's Ministries Committee**—The Women's Ministries leader works with the pastor and church board to establish a Women's Ministries Committee to foster a ministry to women in the church. This committee should be composed of persons interested in the broad spectrum of women's needs and services. To form a balanced team, the members should be persons with varied talents and experience. The major responsibilities of the Women's Ministries Committee will be the following:

1. To assess the needs of women in the local church and community, utilizing surveys and interviews, and in counsel with the pastor and church leaders;
2. To brainstorm, develop strategies, and cooperate with other specialized departments of the Church to foster programs and activities which minister to women;
3. To plan and implement these and other initiatives which relate to women's specific and varied needs, in cooperation with the pastor, departmental specialists, and other church leaders;
4. To facilitate local church participation in annual programs and activities initiated by the conference/union/division/General Conference such as the International Women's Day of Prayer, Women's Ministries Day, and small group ministries to support and encourage them in service. Information regarding these programs is available through the conference/mission Department of Women's Ministries. ☪

The Women's Ministries leader is also added to the church board (*Church Manual* page 79), The Lay Activities Council (*Church Manual* page 81), and the list of those who should be dealt with by the nominating committee (*Church Manual* pages 131-132).



God is not looking for  
your ability or inability.

He is looking for your  
availability.

# The Department of Women's Ministries

## Suggestions as to how the objectives of the Mission Statement may be implemented

*The Department of Women's Ministries exists to uphold, encourage, and challenge Adventist women in their pilgrimage as disciples of Jesus Christ and members of His World Church.*

*Our mission is in the larger sense common to all Christians—that of uplifting Christ in the church and in the world. But more specifically, we are called to:*

- # ***elevate women as persons of inestimable worth because they have been created and redeemed***
  - developing Bible study instruction, groups, and resource materials “by women for women.”
  - making available self-esteem seminars, books, magazines, resource materials, videos, and cassettes.
  - identifying and encouraging the use of spiritual gifts.
  - helping women network with other women for support, encouragement and enjoyment.
  
- # ***enable women to deepen their faith and experience spiritual growth and renewal***
  - promoting the reading of the yearly women's devotional book as well as encouraging women to write for the devotional book.
  - women's Bible studies, resources, seminar materials, small group ministries in neighborhoods and churches.
  - women's prayer partners, conferences, groups, chains, journaling, and seminars.
  - women's spiritual retreats.
  - the International Women's Day of Prayer.
  - training women to disciple and mentor new members, young women, and others desiring to be discipled.

# ***build networks among women in the world church to encourage bonds of friendship and mutual support and the creative exchange of ideas and information***

- planning and conducting retreats.
- holding programs and get-togethers of interest to women such as teas, Mom to Mom programs, Mother's Night Out, and other such programs.
- joining other women around the world in celebrating Women's Ministries Emphasis Day.
- exchanging and networking with sister churches or conferences.
- being an advocate for women, speaking up for them as appropriate, and empowering them to seek solutions to the challenges they face.

# ***mentor young Adventist women, encouraging their involvement, and creating paths for them as they reach for their potential in Christ***

- matching mature Christian women with new members.
- matching mature women with young women.
- encouraging women in leadership to mentor young professional women with leadership potential.
- providing resources on the benefits and role of a mentor.
- promoting Secret Sister type programs in local churches.
- keeping the benefits of mentoring before women in the church.
- planning programs and resources to help adolescents and young women maintain sexual purity.
- providing role models.
- providing leadership opportunities.

# ***address the concerns of women in a global context***

A. Literacy:

- training trainers and tutors.
- developing, finding, and adapting teaching materials.
- securing funding for literacy programs.

B. Poverty:

- independently, or cooperating with ADRA, or other agencies, assisting women in acquiring a trade or profession.
- establishing "Women's Centers" for practical skill training.
- establishing small business enterprises.
- helping women learn money management.

C. Risks to Health:

- providing printed resource materials, videos, and seminars in cooperation with the Health and Temperance Department and Adventist health institutions.

- training women to work in undeveloped areas teaching hygiene and basic health principles to women.
- conducting women's Breathe Free stop-smoking clinics and other programs to help women overcome addictions.

D. Workloads:

- sponsoring spiritual growth programs, support groups, and educational opportunities at times convenient for working women.
- being involved as advocates for women's fair employment practices within denominational employment.
- helping women to have time, motivation, and tools for personal spiritual growth.

E. Abuse:

- helping to educate women regarding abuse through seminars, appropriate counseling, and resource materials.
- making women aware of opportunities for counseling, financial and legal assistance, and safe shelters in their own communities.
- assisting women in finding safe shelters when appropriate.

F. Leadership Training and Mentoring:

- providing leadership training.
- providing training materials, seminars, videos, etc.
- encouraging mentoring.
- providing role-models.
- helping women find leadership opportunities and advancement.

# ***bring women's unique perspectives to the issues facing the world church***

- educating church leaders of the value of including women's perspectives in decision making bodies through leadership conferences, advocacy, and shared examples.
- recommending capable women to serve in leadership positions, church boards, and committees.
- publishing and distributing the Women's Ministries newsletter, *News from the World of Women's Ministries*.
- using the Internet, a Web page, SDA On-Line, faxed memos, or any other media to communicate with church leaders.
- supporting and affirming women in the spirit of Proverbs 31:8, 9, which calls upon us to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy," (NIV).
- speaking on behalf of fair employment practices for those employed by the church.
- educating the church as to the needs of women.

- speaking out in all arenas in behalf of women and girls who are forced into immoral lifestyles because of destitution or poverty.
- being an advocate for women and girls who are the victims of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.
- speaking out against cultural practices which are physically and psychologically harmful to women and which mar or disfigure the temple of God.

# *seek expanding avenues of dynamic Christian service for women*

- assisting women in identifying their individual spiritual gifts.
- providing training seminars and other programs to equip women to use their gifts.
- helping to create opportunities for women to use their spiritual gifts, including public evangelism.
- educating church leadership as to the benefits and necessity of the use of these gifts.
- encouraging the local church to choose representatives and delegates that reflect the gender balance of the congregation as much as possible.

# *challenge each Adventist woman with her potential to complement the gifts given to other women and men as they work side by side to further the global mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—*

- encouraging gender balance on committees, study groups, task forces and boards at all levels of the church.
- creating opportunities for discussions between men and women.
- cooperating on Global Mission projects.
- working together in lay-evangelism.
- reclaiming former members.
- working together in discipling new members.

*That out of the fullness we as women have personally found in Jesus Christ, we may be empowered to share the good news within our families, among our fellow believers, and in ever expanding circles in the unsaved world. 🌍*



## E. G. White Quotes about Women

*“When a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to do 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.*

*“All who work for God should have the Martha and the Mary attributes blended — a willingness to minister and a sincere love of the truth. Self and selfishness must be put out of sight. God calls for earnest women workers, workers who are prudent, warmhearted, tender, and true to principle. He calls for persevering women who will take their minds from self...and will center them on Christ, speaking words of truth, praying with the persons to whom they can obtain access, laboring for the conversion of souls.” —Testimony Treasures, vol. 2, 405.*

*“Women can be instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. It was Mary that first preached a risen Jesus....”*

*“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.*

*“The Lord has a work for women as well as men to do. They may accomplish a good work for God if they will first learn in the school of Christ the precious, all-important lesson of meekness. They must not only bear the name of Christ, but possess His Spirit. They must walk even as He walked, purifying their souls from everything that defiles. Then they will be able to benefit others by presenting the all-sufficiency of Jesus.”—Testimony Treasures, vol 2, 404.*

*“We greatly need consecrated women, who, as messengers of mercy, will visit the mothers and the children in their homes.”—Welfare Ministry, 146.*

*“Women are needed who are not self-important, but gentle in manners and lowly of heart, who will work with the meekness of Christ.”—Welfare Ministry, 150.*

*“The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them....They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed.”—Welfare Ministry, 145.*

*“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.*

*“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 of souls,...they will be working as Christ worked. They will consider no sacrifice too great to make to win souls to Christ.”—Evangelism 465.*

*“There are many...offices connected with the cause of God which our sisters are better qualified to fill than our brethren, and in which they might do efficient service.”—Welfare Ministry 147. ♡*

# Departmental Policies

## GC Women's Ministries

(From the *1997 -1998 GC Working Policy*)

### PHILOSOPHY

The Department of Women's Ministries is committed to encouraging, challenging, equipping, and nurturing Seventh-day Adventist women as they do their part in carrying the Gospel message to the world.

“The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them ...They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed .” — *Welfare Ministry*, p 145.

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Department of Women's Ministries is to nurture, facilitate, and support women in their Christian lives as disciples of Jesus Christ and members of His World Church. In consultation with administration and other departments of the Church, the department shares the responsibility for developing a global evangelistic strategy and provides training to equip the women of the church to uplift Christ in the Church and in the world.

“... 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 for the Church*, vol 4, p 642.

The Department of Women's Ministries will focus on the six critical issues that were identified by the division Women's Ministries directors, and voted by the Women's Ministries Advisory, as being barriers preventing women from reaching their full potential: illiteracy, poverty, threats to health, length of workday and poor working conditions, abuse, and the need for training and mentoring for greater involvement in the mission of the Church.

### OBJECTIVES

In order to fulfill the purpose of the Department of Women's Ministries, eight

objectives have been identified by which the women in the Church may be empowered to share the good news within their families, among their fellow believers, and in ever expanding circles in the unsaved world.

1. Elevate women as persons of inestimable worth by virtue of their creation and redemption.
2. Enable women to deepen their faith and to experience spiritual growth and renewal.
3. Underscore the broad spectrum of needs and concerns of women across the life span from multicultural and multiethnic perspectives.
4. Liaison and cooperate with other specialized departments of the church to meet the needs of women.
5. Build networks among women in the World Church that encourage bonds of friendship, mutual support, and creative exchange of ideas and information.
6. Mentor and encourage young Adventist women, creating paths for their involvement in the Church as they reach for their full potential in Christ.
7. Bring women's unique perspectives on issues facing the Church to decision making bodies.
8. Seek expanding avenues of dynamic Christian service for women, challenging each Adventist woman to use her gifts to complement the talents of others as they work side by side to further the global mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Departmental Responsibilities**

1. Assist divisions in achieving their objectives for the women in their constituency.
2. Advise and counsel divisions in the structure, organization, and direction of Women's Ministries.
3. Provide leadership training seminars and workshops for Women's Ministries personnel at the division level and, by division request to union personnel.

4. Develop manuals, training materials, and other program resource materials, in cooperation with the divisions, to meet the multicultural and multiethnic needs of women worldwide.
5. Heighten awareness of the talents and resources that women bring to the Church.
6. Assist women in identifying their spiritual gifts and inspire them to cultivate these gifts for use in the Church's global mission.
7. Promote spiritual growth among women in the World Church.
8. Reclaim women who have left the fellowship of the Church.
9. Assist in developing strategies that increase opportunities to win back children who no longer walk in the faith of Jesus.
10. Affirm women who serve the Church as laypersons, denominational employees, and in the ministry.
11. Promote education, spiritual growth, and bonding among young women in the Church.
12. Encourage Christian education for young women by providing scholarships through the division Department of Women's Ministries, as funds permit.
13. Identify opportunities for service and leadership in the Church.
14. Heighten awareness regarding the inclusion of women's perspectives in the decision-making process of the World Church (boards, committees, etc.).
15. Establish and maintain a close liaison with church leaders and administrators through frequent consultation.
16. Facilitate the building of networks among women in the world Church to encourage bonds of friendship and mutual support, and to encourage the creative exchange of ideas and information.
17. Encourage Seventh-day Adventist authors and editors to write on subjects that minister to women and to encourage women authors.
18. Maintain a statistical database in order to determine trends and give direction to the work of the department.

19. Recommend policy relative to Women's Ministries.

## DEPARTMENTAL STAFFING

### **Director and Associate Directors**

The Department of Women's Ministries shall have a director and associate directors as needed. Qualified personnel shall be elected on the basis of their expertise and experience to care for the activities and responsibilities encompassed by the work of the department.

### **Specific Responsibilities**

Each individual shall have specific responsibilities and assignments, which will be made known to other appropriate levels of Church organization.

### **Responsibilities of Director**

1. The departmental director or designee shall chair the Women's Ministries Advisory. The director will maintain continuous contact with the staff and coordinate staff functions.
2. The director shall represent, and serve as advocate for, departmental goals, programs, and activities to the administrative bodies of the Church; shall represent administrative viewpoints to the departmental staff; and shall serve as liaison between other departments and the Department of Women's Ministries. ☺

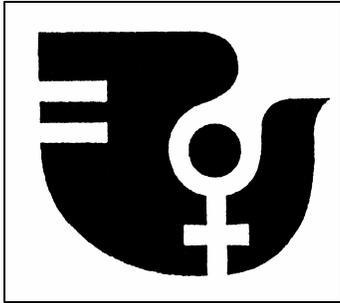
# Terms of Reference

General Conference Department of Women's Ministries

Approved by ADCOM March 10, 1992

<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>		<b>AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY</b>	
1.	Assist divisions in achieving the objectives of Global Mission through Women's Ministries.	1.	Power to act.
2.	Advise and counsel divisions in Women's Ministries (structure/organization, etc.).	2.	Power to act.
3.	Create an awareness of the talents and resources women bring to the Church and inspire them to develop and dedicate their gifts to the global mission of the Church.	3.	Power to act.
4.	Promote spiritual growth among women in the world Church.	4.	Power to act.
5.	Develop program resources for the divisions that meet the multicultural felt needs of women.	5.	Power to act.
6.	Assist in developing strategies that increase opportunities to win back our children who no longer walk in the faith of Jesus.	6.	Power to act.
7.	Affirm women who serve the Church as lay persons, denominational employees, and in the ministry.	7.	Power to act.
8.	Promote education, spiritual growth, and bonding among young women of the Church.	8.	Power to act.
9.	Encourage education and identify opportunities for service and leadership in the Church.	9.	Power to act.

10.	Recommend the inclusion of women's perspectives in the decision-making process of the World Church (boards, committees, etc.).	10.	Recommend to Church administrators.
11.	Facilitate the building of networks among women in the World Church to encourage bonds of friendship and mutual support and the creative exchange of ideas and information.	11.	Power to act.
12.	Encourage SDA authors and editors to write on subjects that minister to women and encourage women authors.	12.	Power to act.



Logo of the United Nations 4<sup>th</sup> World  
Conference on Women, 1995

## A Statement to the United Nations

*[A Statement released by the General Conference Department of Women's Ministries in connection with the kick-off of "The Year of the Adventist Woman," January 9, 1995.]*

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has declared 1995 to be The Year of the Adventist Woman. As the women of the Seventh-day Adventist church both seek and share affirmation during this year, we also desire to improve the world around us. It is with great distress and concern that we see the difficulties, burdens, and hardships suffered by so many women, our sisters, around the world. We observe this condition to be true whether in developed or in developing nations, in lands at peace or in areas of crises caused by war or natural disaster.

We view with distress the great gap between the rights of women called for in the United Nations' Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the reality of the world around us. We too are convinced that "discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity,..." and that it does in fact hamper "the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity." (*Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979*).

As Christians we believe that all people are created in the image of a loving God. Because of our gratitude for what God has done for us through the Savior, we believe it is our duty and privilege to reach out to each other in support, to lift the burden of trouble or despair whenever and however possible. We also believe in sharing the joys and satisfaction of being a woman of God.

The standard for Seventh-day Adventist Christians is acknowledged in the church's Bible-based Fundamental Belief No. 13, "Unity in the Body of Christ." Here it is pointed out: "In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation."

The Seventh-day Adventist Church deplores all forms of sexism or any form of discrimination based on one's gender. There must not be a seeking for power over any other individual based on gender, but an encouraging of power within each woman

and man that allows her or him to reach out to work with others and for the betterment of all.

Seventh-day Adventists want to be faithful to the reconciling ministry assigned to the Christian church. As a worldwide community of faith, the Seventh-day Adventist Church wishes to witness to and exhibit in her own ranks the fairness, the equality and love that transcend gender differences and overcome past alienation based on gender. Sexist discrimination is an offense against our fellow human beings, who are created in God's image.

We believe all persons are blessed with a free will. We affirm that each person, woman as well as man, should be the one to make decisions regarding the issues that most affect them and their own lives. Of basic concern, is our belief that women should have the right to free and unrestricted religious choices. We believe that we should respect the wishes and desires of the others in our family but we are each accountable for our own actions and for our own relationship with the Creator of the Universe.

We believe that each woman has the right to an education to the extent that it is available to anyone in the community. According to the United Nations, there are over 100,000,000 adult illiterates in the world today, three-fourths of them women. We maintain that until a woman has the right to a basic education and the right to gain literacy, she will not be able to feed her family properly, give them health care, help with the family or nation's economy, know her own religious values or have respect for her own individual person. When the woman can read, the family will also have access to literacy.

We believe that a woman has a right to protection and dignity of her own body and mind. Violence against any human being is wrong and a woman has the right to freedom from mental, physical or sexual abuse, including in her home and family.

We believe further that a woman has the right to health information and care, that her special needs as a woman must be addressed by research, and her individual needs be given respectful attention. We believe that a woman has the right to equal rewards and support for work performed in the work place or the home. As a woman participates in the work place, whether out of economic necessity or for personal reasons, the conditions, remuneration, and length of the work day must be addressed to lessen stress, fatigue and burnout.

Finally, we believe that because of changes in status, work, and responsibilities, a woman must have access to leadership training and mentoring from



Logo of the 4<sup>th</sup> Women's NGO (Non Governmental Organization) Conference on Women in Beijing, China, 1995.

both men and women so that she too may enjoy success in all areas of the home, the community, and the place of worship.

We hold that a woman, as well as a man, has the right to these privileges, whether she or he believes in the same way we do or not. While a woman's rights will result in economic and environmental benefits to all, a woman should not have these rights on that basis alone. She should have these rights because she is a human being.

We call on all Seventh-day Adventists and others of good will to help create an atmosphere of freedom, growth, equality and goodwill toward all women in their family, their community and their religious community that will lead to the ability of each woman to use her individual gifts to the fullest potential.

Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, said over a hundred years ago, "When a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to do this work, and it will see the loss if the talents of both are not combined" (E. G. White, *Evangelism*, page 469). 🍀

# SIX CRITICAL CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN

- Illiteracy
- Poverty
- Threats to health/poor health care
- Length of workday and conditions
- Abuse
- Lack of training, experience, and opportunities to participate in the Church's mission

## ILLITERACY (Education/ Literacy level)

Education is accorded to the privileged. Globally, lack of education and illiteracy is widespread with wide disparity between affluent and poor countries. Even in affluent countries, overall girls receive less education and training than boys. In Sub-Sahara Africa and areas of South Asia as few as 5-8% of the women have basic reading skills. Yemen leads the world in female illiteracy with 3% of the women able to read.

Illiteracy is powerfully linked to low social status, poverty and poor health. Lack of literacy skills traps women into the cycle of poverty with limited options for economic improvement, sentencing their children to chronic poverty and limited education and training opportunities. Frequently the only “skill” a poor woman has to support her children is to sell herself. When sex becomes a bargaining chip for daily bread and ignorance blocks opportunity to escape from poverty, the soil is fertile for the pandemic of AIDS.

Lack of female literacy is also closely associated with increased infant and child mortality and illness. If the children are to live and to thrive, the mother must be given a lamp unto her feet—the skill of literacy. Further, illiterate women are blocked from reading the word of God. This barrier cripples them in their spiritual growth and in the spiritual training of their children.

## POVERTY

According to the 1993 State of the World, the richest 25% of the world's population absorbs 90% of the resources of the world. Among the poorest people in the world are women. Poverty is increasingly a feminine social disease. According to the International Labor Organization of the United Nations, women who globally represent 50% of the world's population, do 2/3's of the world's paid and unpaid work, earn 10% of the money in the world and own 1% of the world's property. Feminine poverty is related to four key factors:

- 1) global deterioration in the economy
- 2) migration from rural to urban areas due to environmental degradation and declining soil fertility resulting in hunger
- 3) global conflict resulting in refugee movements, most, of whom are women and children; and
- 4) widespread female head of household status

It is estimated that 1/3 to 1/2 of all households worldwide are headed by women, a major risk factor for poverty as women overall simply do not make as much money as men. The poverty cycle tightens for poor women who have limited education, limited job opportunities and responsibility for growing children without sufficient resources.

## **THREATS TO HEALTH (Poor Health Status)**

Poor health undermines a woman's ability to be a fully productive participant in God's work. Globally, the health of women is deteriorating. This process is closely aligned to environmental deterioration, declining agricultural productivity, and social demands on women, particularly in poor countries, for the production of large numbers of children. In many parts of the world, the devalued social status of being born female sentences the woman to less claim on food and health care.

Fifty percent of all poor women and 2/3's of pregnant poor women in less developed countries are anemic, robbing them of energy and physical resources to give their best to the new lives they nurture in their bodies. Maternal mortality remains the leading cause of death among women globally. One-half million women die each year from childbearing related complications. For every one that dies, twenty are physically damaged in the process of giving life. Maternal mortality has been called the "silent epidemic."

## **LENGTH OF WORKDAY (A Woman's Workload)**

Women in poorer countries routinely work 18 hours per day. In some parts of the world, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, women do 90% of all the agricultural work. Frequently expected to perform a full day's paid work for the financial viability of the family, a woman then faces additional hours of daily housework and child care, often with limited access to basic necessities of fuel and water. In many parts of the world, women have no voice in the distribution of family funds to which they have contributed. Some studies have shown that when women have some decision making voice in income allocations, the health, nutrition and education needs of the children are more likely to be given priority.

In the affluent world, the long working day also affects women with heavy expectations for job performance while maintaining family integrity. Balancing the societal expectations for maintaining an intact and healthy family while achieving in a highly competitive work environment results in long days and limited rest and recreation. Literature on women's health identifies chronic fatigue syndrome as a growing phenomena among women in both poor and affluent countries.

## **ABUSE**

Domestic violence, incest, rape and battering are all too common burdens that women carry. Physical, sexual and psychological battering occur to small girls, adolescents, single and married adult and elderly women. No strata of society is immune from the epidemic of violence. Selective amniocentesis is a common practice in some parts of

the world, a violent form of discrimination against the girl child. In parts of South Asia, the under-five year old girl child mortality rate is five times higher than the under-five year old boy child mortality rate. This is closely linked to inadequate feeding and lack of health care for the devalued girl child.

Girl children are often valued primarily for their contribution to the household work while their brothers are privileged to receive more education, food and health care. Incest, child pornography, the selling of the girl child into prostitution, and early arranged marriages are settings for abuse and torture. Bride burning, rape, female genital mutilation and emotional battering are further examples of common abuse experiences of women.

Physical abuse has been documented in one out of every six pregnancies in the United States except when the expectant mother is an adolescent, in which the abuse rate is one out of every three pregnancies. The abused victim learns to expect battering and to blame herself for its occurrence until it breaks her spirit. Violence against women is frequently a hidden sin but it is a direct violation of Christ-centered behavior. As such, tolerance of abuse within the church is a denial of Christ.

**LACK OF TRAINING,  
EXPERIENCE &  
OPPORTUNITIES**

Opportunities for women in leadership and advancement are difficult for women in almost all areas of the world, in business, in government, and in the church.

Historically, leadership in the Adventist Church has been provided for by the pastorate.

These pastors, if they showed leadership potential, were moved into leadership positions; as this happened, they received special and/or on-the-job training and mentoring. Through experience on church, conference and union boards and committees, they learned how the church conducted business and became comfortable in leadership. Most women have not had the advantage of this type of experience and training. Therefore, as women move into positions of leadership in Women's Ministries, most need specialized training. Also, as the church looks to more inclusiveness and balance in leadership and on committees and boards at all levels, more lay persons, including women, are taking their places. These individuals need training and mentoring. Women's Ministries takes responsibility to provide or help leaders access this leadership training and mentoring. ☪

## Women's Ministries Logo

The General Conference Department of Women's Ministries developed a logo not long after the department was born, depicting four women. These women represent not only the inclusiveness of Women's Ministries but also represent some of the objectives of Women's Ministries.

- It represents women of all ages.
- It represents women of different ethnic origins.
- It represents women working together.
- It represents women with a book. It may be a Bible, representing spiritual growth. The women may be learning for themselves or teaching others. It may be a literacy book. It may be that the women are studying leadership or mentoring other woman. Or it may be a book on any of the other areas of interest to women, but women are growing and sharing.
- It represents women supporting and caring for each other; together they represent an important part of the church, and together they can make a difference.



You may use this logo or you may adopt one of your own for your area, or the two may be used. But worldwide, this is the general logo representing Women's Ministries. *You may obtain a copy of the logo on disk from your division Women's Ministries director.*

### Women's Ministries Colors

Two colors have been chosen as the official colors for Women's Ministries. These may be used for the logo or any other art work, but you are certainly not limited to the use of these colors. The colors are:

aqua — PMS color #320  
purple — PMS color # 273.

(The PMS colors are exact color tones used by printers and designers.)