

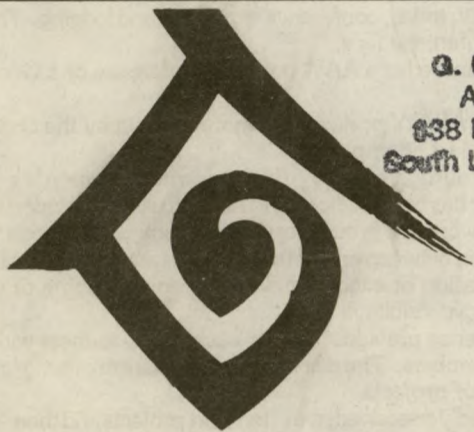
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November/December 1993



1994 International Year of the Family  
Année internationale de la famille  
Año Internacional de la Familia  
Международный год семьи  
السنة الدولية للأسرة  
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## Church joins U.N. in international celebration

by Lara Beaven

Seventh-day Adventists around the globe will join the United Nations in celebrating 1994 as the International Year of the Family. Ron and Karen Flowers, directors of the General Conference Office of Family Ministries, are aiding in the organization of programs that will help families worldwide to strengthen their relationships.

The U.N. programs are being coordinated from an office in Vienna, Austria, and the office of family ministries is working very closely with U.N. planners, Karen Flowers says.

"The U.N. tends to name a year, like the International Year of the Family, but they

don't have a lot of funds or personnel to accomplish it. They're very dependent on other organizations," she says.

Under the theme of Empowering Families for Growth and Change, the office of family ministries is developing programs and events aimed at both church members and non-members. Not all the events will take place in the 1994 calendar year, Karen Flowers says, but they will all attempt to focus on the family.

"Globally, there are a myriad of changes that all have their impact on the family, and we are concerned with helping the family cope with these changes," Karen Flowers

See ADVENTIST, page 3

## TEAM study keeps hope alive for women in ministry

by Rebecca Brillhart

Almost two years in preparation and publishing, *Keeping Hope Alive* discloses the opinions of women in ministry after the 1990 Indianapolis General Conference Session decision not to ordain them, and their intentions in the aftermath. Conducted by Hamilton Chandler Communications for Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry (TEAM), the 32-page report reveals trends in morale, career goals, direction, and other factors that affect women in their roles as local pastors, hospital chaplains, religion teachers, and pastoral counselors.

TEAM hopes this survey will also be an instrument of affirmation—a blueprint to help find ways to preserve, nurture, support, and expand this precious resource group of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

An aggressive distribution campaign has begun. Copies will go to local conference and union presidents; select church officers (General Conference and North American Division); women in ministry; college and university religion department heads, librarians, and campus ministries representatives; women's ministries directors; and to a host of interested groups and individuals across North America and abroad.

Here is a sampling of the survey's findings:

- Adventist women in ministry have, in their own minds, disconnected the spiritual reality of a call to ministry from denominational procedures. Nine out of 10 believed that their call to ministry is valid whether or not the denomination recognized it with credentials of any kind. Seven out of 10 felt that the present stance of the Adventist Church did not constitute a full recognition of their call to ministry.

- A majority stated that the denomination's failure to fully recognize their call to ministry constituted a serious deafness to the Holy Spirit. Slightly fewer than half felt that the credentials presently extended to them were an affirmation of their ministry.

- Two out of three women in ministry reported that the Indianapolis decision had not created specific problems for

them. The third who had experienced problems reported being denied ministerial jobs, having to cope with confusion among the laity, and experiencing pangs of conscience as well as decreased morale.

- Seven out of 10 said they still felt a strong sense of calling to ministry and would take advantage of reasonable opportunities for employment and credentials. One in six indicated she did not see any future for women in Adventist ministry, and fewer than one in 10 reported that she was leaving the ministry.

- The majority said they presently hold denominational credentials as a licensed or commissioned minister. Most of the fully credentialed, full-time women in ministry were earning the same amount as they would if they were ordained.

- At least 17 women in ministry have left employment in Adventist ministry in recent years. (In January 1992, the NAD Office of Women's Ministries identified only 97 women serving in a ministerial capacity.) Few said they resigned because of unfair treatment or were encouraged to leave because of a decision not to include women in ministry.

- Two-thirds, however, have thought about leaving the ministry, and women from the Baby Boom generation were more likely to feel this way.

What can be done to prevent an erosion of women in ministry?

- Affirmative action on employment issues

- Equity in recognition and professional treatment

- Phase out the "good ole boy" approach of the traditional, restricted system.

- Improved support systems for women (i.e. networking, regular meetings)

- Education for church leaders and members

"Although I have thought of leaving the ministry," wrote one woman pastor, "I know I will not because I am called and have been given too much fight to quit. I love this church; the people, the message. I have hope that this church [will] be a family in the likeness of

God.' I want to make a difference. I am making a difference. And people at TEAM give me support and affirmation that keeps me going when it's rough."

Some other things also became obvious to TEAM as the survey results were reviewed:

- The high percentage of returns (74 percent) indicated that there was more than an average interest on the part of women in ministry in a study of this kind.

- There was still a significant representation of women in parish ministry on both coasts of North America and a significant lack of representation in between and in Canada.

- Women in Adventist chaplaincy and religious academics generally believed they were accepted in their fields and expressed less dismay and concern about their situations or futures. This, however, was not the case for chaplains seeking employment outside

in the cold," reports Patricia Habada, chair of TEAM.

"A woman recently called TEAM to share her personal experience of public humiliation by a local conference officer following a presentation she gave because she was 'after all, not ordained.' This church can't afford to reject one woman's call," adds Habada. "Their numbers are so small and the need is too great."

*Keeping Hope Alive* includes detailed breakdowns and graphs of the data to support the abbreviated review of the survey findings above. The following sections are included: sample and demographics, pastoral assignment, remuneration of women in ministry, ministerial credentials, sense of call to ministry, perceptions about recognition and support, denomination affirmation, impact of the Indianapolis decision, looking to the future, and women's stories.



Adventist institutions and for many women in parish ministry who often felt rejected by those who were not able to accept a woman pastor.

TEAM has added a selection of comments from the women surveyed, called "Women's Stories," to enhance the statistical data. Without revealing the sources or identifiable circumstances, TEAM believes these comments represent a part of women's ministry that is too often overlooked.

"Despite the progress that many women pastors, chaplains, and educators are making in their communities, others still feel left out

The survey report exists largely because of the seed gift of an anonymous donor and the courage of many women willing to make their personal experiences in Adventist ministry a part of the research. Copies are available for \$5 each (includes postage and shipping costs). Write for *Keeping Hope Alive* in care of TEAM, P.O. Box 7816, Langley Park, MD 20787-7816. Allow two weeks for delivery. Comments about the survey findings and their use are encouraged.

—Rebecca Brillhart is project director for TEAM and lives in Columbia, Maryland.



Presidential Communique

A refresher lesson in AAW basics

by Elisabeth Wear

QUESTION: "What is the Association of Adventist Women?"

ANSWER: "The Association of Adventist Women (AAW) seeks to encourage better support, communication, and understanding among women in the Adventist Church. AAW also seeks to help the church better understand and support the women in the church."

QUESTION: "But what does the AAW do?"

ANSWER: We do five things.

1. We publish a newsletter.

Communication is an important goal and The Adventist Woman newsletter is the primary vehicle for that communication. The newsletter describes what is happening in the Adventist Church that affects women and relays news about specific women and projects for women within the denomination.

Your membership fee helps pay for almost a thousand free subscriptions. The recipients are many and varied: college and academy deans and certain department heads; presidents, secretaries, and treasurers of conferences, unions, and divisions; the directors of church ministries, communications, and education at all levels. In addition, the editors of union papers, pastors of major churches, and many hospital chaplains all receive free subscriptions.

Through the newsletter you not only become informed but help to keep the decision-makers of the church informed. Buying a subscription to the newsletter is one of the easiest things you can do to help the cause of women in the Adventist Church.

2. We have annual conferences.

Eleven national AAW conferences and one international conference have been held since 1983. National conferences usually feature seminars for spiritual enrichment, for professional development, for homemaking skills, and for special projects. Most of the attendees find several seminars that fit their needs.

3. We give continued support to the Adventist Woman of the Year project.

The Adventist Woman of the Year (AWOY) project is a major undertaking that requires a large amount of funding. Each year categories are reviewed and revised by the AAW board to reflect our ideals. Advertising is national in scope and timely enough for adequate responses.

Judges are selected by the board to ensure equity in race, age, occupation, and, if possible, geographic location. The judging process requires a mountain of reading for each judge. Every completed application is photocopied five times and distributed for the judges to critique.

Meanwhile, sponsors are solicited from health systems, hospitals, conferences, unions, churches, and individuals. Moments of anxiety mount as donations are balanced with expenses. After the women are selected, the national board seeks donations from those who know the honorees to assist with travel, conference expenses, and lodging. The national board guarantees the honorees' conference fees.

Women of the Year are honored at a AAW national conference or a General Conference Session.

Next to the newsletter, the AWOY project does more to acquaint the church with the gifts of women than any other project attempted.

4. We give visibility and encouragement to other Adventist Women's groups.

This issue of the newsletter has been dedicated to helping us better understand and support a variety of diverse Adventist women's groups, each with a unique emphasis. From our point of view, there is no competition between any of these groups and the Association of Adventist Women. We support the mission of each and even helped start some of them. While we cannot give money, we can give visibility.

The AAW national conference provides time for each group to meet with their individual national boards and recruit members. The display of material from other groups is facilitated.

5. We encourage a variety of projects.

Because the mission is broadly conceived, we often start projects and then "give them away" when it becomes evident that there is sufficient support within the church to maintain the project. Two such projects are closely tied with AAW but need greater support than the national AAW can provide.

The first is support for women in ministry and in training to become ministers. This project should be sponsored by a General Conference department. At present, support is minimal or nonexistent.

Women and Men Against Sexual Harassment (W.A.S.H.), a relatively new group still based with AAW, has its own board and enjoys General Conference assistance. The national AAW will help this group incorporate as a non-profit entity.

W.A.S.H on the Line for One Year

by Peggy Harris

Women and Men Against Sexual Harassment and Other Abuses began at the 1992 Conference of the Association of Adventist Women as a response to a fund-raising letter about sexual abuse in the Adventist Church. During the past year W.A.S.H. has met several of its goals. It has developed an extensive list of books, films, and videos on the subject of abuse and treatment that has been made available to women's ministries and church groups and interested persons upon request.

W.A.S.H. has also obtained some local conferences' statements on abuse and sexual harassment, and several of its board members have given seminars for various church groups.

At the 1993 AAW conference, W.A.S.H. held three seminars on abuse and developed recommendations on how various church entities should deal with abuse. The recommendations included definitions of abuse.

The symbol of W.A.S.H. is the hummingbird, which was chosen because hummingbirds are small, delicate, and fragile creatures. Their powerful wings have the ability to fly up, down, forwards, sideways, and backwards.

Those who have suffered sexual, physical, or mental abuse or harassment are often emotionally delicate and fragile beings. Yet in order to survive, they have had to become strong. Their lives may have had to change direction in order to survive abuse or harassment. Great strength is required to maintain a

functional life.

Although those who have never suffered any type of abuse may have difficulty understanding the devastation it causes, they can be protectors of these precious creations of God and help in the restoration process.

The first Hummingbird Award was given to Glenn and Carol Munson, Oregon Conference Family Life Abuse Taskforce leaders, for their outstanding efforts in addressing abuse in the forum of seminars and training pastors and other church leaders. The Oregon Conference is the first local conference with staff that are addressing this critical issue. Several other local conferences have people who are addressing the subject in their own conference as well as other conferences and churches.

One important goal of W.A.S.H. is to help church members and leaders address the subject of abuse in the Adventist Church in a way that does not further victimize the victim. If you have expertise in this area, have a conference statement on abuse or would like to obtain materials about W.A.S.H., write to:

W.A.S.H.
P.O. Box 7414
Langley Park, MD 20787

-Peggy Harris is the chair of the W.A.S.H. Taskforce Board and writes from suburban Maryland.



Introducing our guest editor Lara Wynne Beaven

by Betty Howard

Finishing a double major in English and journalism in four years is to be commended. However, to do this plus belonging to honor societies, being actively involved in the community, the campus, the church, and working 15-20 hours each week is more than impressive.

Lara, a senior at Columbia Union College, is a member of the Washington Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. In the summer of 1992, she was accepted into and successfully completed the highly competitive Institute on Political Journalism coordinated by The Fund for American Studies and Georgetown University. At CUC, she has worked as a teaching assistant for the Summer Start Program as well as being editor of the campus weekly. Volunteer, presenter, honor student, writer, coordinator, intern, friend—that's Lara Beaven.

AAW shares sentiments similar to those her parents express. They told me they are proud to be related to her. AAW is very proud to have this student as our guest editor for the November/December 1993 issue of The Adventist Woman.

-Betty Howard is the director of special projects for AAW and writes from Takoma Park, Maryland.

AWI works for justice

by Yvonne Stratton

In 1988, a group of women met in Indiana to form the Adventist Women's Institute—a group committed to action for justice within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. AWI actively pursues the attainment of the full and equal participation, education, and development of all persons within the SDA Church community—particularly women of all ages—without regard to ethnic origin, economic or social status.

As part of AWI's ministry, the group publishes a magazine-style newsletter, "Ponderings," a forum for women's thoughts, pain, accomplishments, concerns, and joys. The group's ministry to women who are in need of emotional support provides an outlet for those who are upset with things in the church but who are unwilling to leave.

Recently, AWI decided to try a circular form of governance as opposed to a vertical form. Women have self-imposed, or "called" if you will, roles in contrast to elected offices. AWI leaders describe the change as challenging but empowering.

One recently adopted policy statement on advocacy by AWI reads as follows:

"One of the primary purposes for the founding of the Adventist Women's Institute in 1988 was to provide a forum for an independent group of women to speak freely on issues of justice and policy. To achieve this goal AWI resolved to speak and act without regard to threats of reprisal from employers or denominational bureaucracies.

"We recognize that many denominationally employed women must choose between their employment and their freedom of speech. This regrettable situation makes it all the more urgent for women in more independent

See AWI, page 3

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The Association of Adventist Women is a national organization that sponsors local chapters. Its newsletter, The Adventist Woman, is published six times per year.

- I am enclosing \$15 to subscribe to The Adventist Woman.
My tax-deductible contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is also enclosed

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EDITORIAL STAFF

The Adventist Woman
Volume 12, No. 6

- Guest Editor: Lara Beaven
Assistant Editor: Beverly Rumble
Circulation: Elisabeth Wear

## Adventist Church Values Families

From front page

says.

Last September, the Office of Family Ministries sponsored a pan-African conference to discuss ways the church could be proactive in helping African families cope with the problems of urbanization, socioeconomic changes, extended family situations, and the influx of Western influences that have unsettled African cultures. Fifty-five delegates from 21 countries in three divisions participated.

"It was really exciting [at the conference]. We just facilitated the process; all of the papers presented were prepared by Africans. They were addressing their own issues," Karen Flowers says.

The Adventist church has also made a contribution to the U.N.'s international project fund to help developing countries with programs designed to strengthen families. Karen Flowers says this is the kind of thing that helps people see Adventism in a positive light.

Many of the church's projects and programs for the International Year of the Family will be organized at the union and division levels. The British Union family ministries office, in the Trans-European Division, is working with an interdenominational group

to plan a celebration of the family in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, England. And a marriage-strengthening weekend series is being planned for 16,000 people in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in the South American Division.

To help the church plan family-strengthening programs after the International Year of the Family is over, a study is being conducted to gather demographic and functional data about the Adventist family.

Karen Flowers says the church doesn't have the budget or the personnel to "do a real world study, but we are hoping that by developing a good questionnaire and producing a reputable study in at least one union in every division, then the divisions can gather data for themselves. The data will have more impact at the local level where the divisions can tailor the ministry to their needs."

In addition to special programs and seminars, a special issue of the *Adventist Review* focusing on the International Year of the Family will appear next February. Seven weeks of radio programs about the family will be broadcast in 40 languages over Adventist World Radio, as well.

## Worship and the word through women's eyes

by Kit Watts

Since February 1991 a group of women in Takoma Park, Maryland, have met together 17 times for Mary's Place: Worship and the Word Through Women's Eyes. The group's name is derived from Luke 10:39 where Jesus commends Mary for sitting at His feet and listening to His word, despite the challenge from others about whether this is appropriate.

The size of the group varies from 20 to 75 but the components of the one-and-a-half hour event remain consistent. Women plan, preach, pray, sing and tell their own stories.

Men are always welcome—and always attend. But the three founders have held to their vision that Mary's Place should be a haven where women can grow in leadership and where they can freely express themselves in content and worship style.

Led by Kit Watts, Penny Shell, and Beverly Habada, Mary's Place is dedicated to worship and Bible study in a way that is sensitive to women's needs and perspectives. The group has an ambitious list of 14 goals and ideals. Besides desiring to "discover present truth" and to "cherish our [Adventist] heritage," they want to "be advocates" and "promote

inclusiveness." All hymns are reworded (and those who pray are encouraged) to avoid male gender names for God and use terms that clearly portray the community of faith as being made up of both women and men.

Women pastors, psychologists, Bible scholars, and church leaders have spoken at Mary's Place addressing topics like women disciples in the Bible, prayer, co-dependency, and sexuality. Other programs have featured concerts, a Christian clown performance of parable and mime, and a birthday party for Ellen White (complete with balloons and her favorite pie).

Mary's Place meets on announced Sabbaths from 9:30 to 11 a.m., usually on the campus of Columbia Union College. The mailing list reaches about 150 individuals. Those interested in knowing more about Mary's Place should write to:

Mary's Place  
211 Hillsboro Dr.  
Silver Spring, MD 20902.

—Kit Watts is historian for the Association of Adventist Women and whites from Silver Spring, Maryland.

## Women's Ministries: both a global and local outlook

by Lara Beaven

Women's Ministries departments are found at all levels of church governance from the world level to local churches. While leaders at the division levels seek to include women in more areas of church planning and employment, leaders at the union, conference, and local levels work at planning programs and events especially suited to their members.

The General Conference Office of Women's Ministries, the world level organization, is headed by Rose Otis. Her office produces a newsletter, "Women's Focus," every few months as well as a more-frequent one-page news sheet. The news sheet is faxed to women's ministries directors overseas, who in turn duplicate the sheet and pass it on to their division and union personnel.

Recent world news from "Women's Focus" and the "Women's Ministries" news sheet includes reports of numerous evangelistic campaigns organized and presented by women in places as varied as Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, the Philippines, and Indonesia. "Women's Focus" also reports that women in the Far Eastern Division have won more than 700 souls in the first half of 1993.

The General Conference Office of Women's Ministries also produces devotional books for women, presents training seminars to teach women how to use their skills in outreach ministry, and seeks to have a women's ministry director in each division. The South American Division recently named its first women's ministries director, Susana Schulz.

### North American Division Plans

At the North American Division level, women's ministries, led by Elizabeth Sterndale, is working to help women gain employment and to gain recognition and representation. The office is also working toward the use of more inclusive language in all areas of the church.

"We want women integrated into the whole church system. We want women to get heard and be listened to. We want to make women better citizens of their neighborhoods, the church, and the world," says Sterndale.

But what many women associate with women's ministries are retreats. Sterndale says women's ministries offices will continue to provide that type of support to women but will additionally focus on nurturing young people and helping abused people, whether suffering from physical, emotional or sexual abuse, through the healing process.

Ongoing programs or projects in the planning stages at the division level include writing

a devotional book aimed at Hispanic women, creating a magazine for Adventist women, placing a women's ministries director in each church, and providing the names of women speakers to academics, colleges, and camp meeting planners, Sterndale says.

The NAD Women's Ministries has also worked to help plan a Women's Day of Prayer for March of 1994. And coming up in 1995, the church will celebrate the Year of the Adventist Women.

### At the Union Level

Women's ministries events and plans vary from region to region. Evelyn Glass, of the Mid-American Union, was one of the first women's ministries directors, and her union has taken the more traditional approach of planning women's retreats.

The Mid-American Union holds yearly retreats that are very well attended, according to Glass.

"We're very excited about [the high attendance]. Each retreat has been such a spiritual blessing for the women," Glass says. "I think each [woman] was drawn closer to Christ. So often women are the caregivers and don't have time to be taken care of. We try to really pamper the women at the retreats."

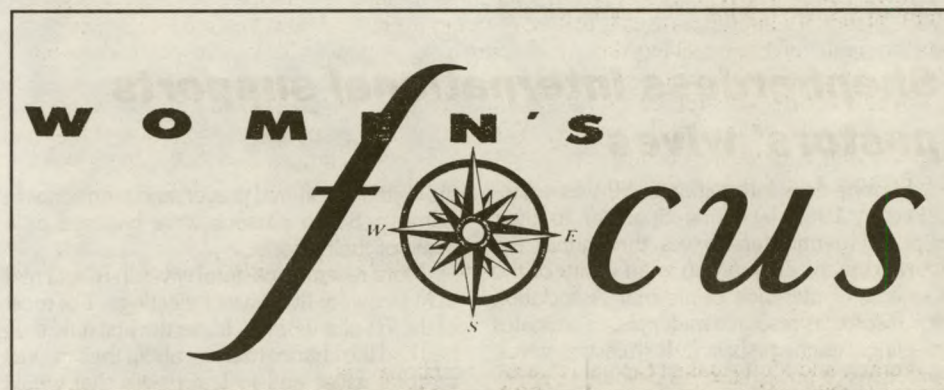
Some local conferences in the Mid-American Union have taken the retreat idea one step further by holding weekend meetings and seminars for women with particular needs. Glass says the Rocky Mountain Conference has held one retreat for single mothers and is planning another.

The retreats have helped women feel better about themselves by covering such topics as investment planning, public speaking, grief recovery, sexual abuse recovery, and learning to be happier.

Glass says many of the women enjoy the weekend retreats so much that they decide to continue meeting with each other in their home churches; they often do "fun" things together in addition to their spiritual meetings.

For example, Glass tells of one group who decided to have a swimming party, but held it at night so everyone could feel comfortable in her swimming suit and not be self-conscious about her appearance. Another group had a slumber party. Their husbands took care of their children and the women met on a Saturday night for vespers and sharing. Those who didn't want to sleep on the floor went home and came back in the morning for breakfast.

The benefits of women's retreats and local fellowships are numerous, Glass says.



Women's Focus is the newsletter of the General Conference Office of Women's Ministries.

"Women have stopped divorce [proceedings] after a retreat. They have gotten a different outlook. They have liked hearing the gospel from a feminine point of view," she says.

The focus of Mid-American Union retreats is building happy relationships. "Even if you're hurting you can climb above it," Glass says.

Norma Sahlin, Columbia Union women's ministries director, has recently facilitated the task of developing a strategic plan for her union's activities. The plan, called "Vision for Mission," was begun in May of this year at a union-wide women's ministries directors' meeting.

The Columbia Union has also presented retreats for its women, but with the beginning of the Vision for Mission process, the union is examining the areas in which women may need additional ministries. Sahlin says the Columbia Union is the first to start this planning process, but the other unions were introduced to Vision for Mission at the NAD Women's Ministries meetings held in November.

Steered through the strategic planning by Monte Sahlin, a planning consultant from the

North American Division staff and the husband of the union women's ministries director, the local conference leaders identified several priorities for the Columbia Union.

These priorities included:

- Increasing the number of women participating at all levels of the church.
- Identifying and meeting the needs of groups of women; i.e., those with non-Adventist spouses or in specific age groups.
- Strengthening communication through newsletters, videos, and other media.
- Building leadership skills in women.
- Organizing prayer networks.
- Developing trainers and workshop presenters.

Once priorities have been established, then comes the most difficult part—drafting step-by-step action plans to move toward these goals. Norma Sahlin says women throughout the Columbia Union will need to support their women's ministries directors if the goals are to be met.

Women interested in learning more about their local women's ministries activities and goals should contact their conference director.

## AWI Provides Voice For Hurting Women

From page 2

positions to speak up on behalf of themselves and their less independently-situated sisters.

"For the above reasons, it is AWI's policy to address all issues of policy and practice, including instances of abuse or unjust advantage taken of women, with forthright advocacy. AWI believes this policy best serves the interests and integrity of all women, men and children of the church and community."

AWI is committed to publishing "Ponderings," to supporting women and especially women pastors, and to taking up the

sword of the Spirit for ongoing activism, an Adventist form of guerrilla warfare, for justice within our church.

Those wishing to receive "Ponderings" should write to:

Ponderings  
P.O. Box 25794  
Santa Ana, CA 92799-5794.

—Yvonne Stratton is a physician specializing in obstetrics and Gynecology and writes from Walla Walla, Washington.

## Women contribute to church growth in the Philippines

by Zaida Salazar

In the Philippines, it used to be that when we spoke of church growth there was a tendency to overlook the women and their contribution toward it. We usually associated church growth with male pastors, laymen, church elders, and other male church leaders.

However, the picture has gradually changed. After looking closely into the Filipino traits and observing the growth of the Adventist churches in various missions/conferences in the North Philippines, I have come to the conclusion that Filipino Adventist women are "unsung heroes" in soul-winning.

Filipino Adventist women have experienced the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and have devoted their time, money, efforts, and talents to the finishing of the work in our generation.

Filipino women are generally more spiritual and more receptive to matters regarding religion than Filipino men. This is illustrated by the preponderance of females over males in Adventist churches and in other Protestant denominations.

Since Filipino children tend to form a closer bond with their mothers than with their fathers, their religious preference is greatly influenced by their mothers' religious affiliation. Filipino women who are won to the Adventist Church bring with them their chil-

dren and grandchildren, thus contributing to the growth of the church. Many of these mothers have remained faithful, despite the fact that their husbands never accepted Adventism, and have spawned generations of faithful and active Adventists.

Filipino Adventist women who work outside the home in non-denominational institutions share the gospel with their colleagues more freely than do their male counterparts. Their openness and ease in discussing Adventist life-style and doctrines with their co-workers, both male and female, have led many to the church.

Women Bible instructors (Filipino term for women pastors) have been working hand in hand with laywomen in conducting all these programs. People who were led to the truth by these dedicated, nurturing women find it easy to adjust to their new "status." The new believers also are more ready to share their new-found faith with their non-believing friends because they feel secure in the caring and nurturing attitude of the women who have led them to the Lord.

—Zaida Salazar is a student at Lyceum of Batangas School of Dentistry in the Philippines.

## Shepherdess International supports pastors' wives

Shepherdess International (SI) was established in 1982 by Marie Spangler to offer support to ministers' wives throughout the world church. The group is an entity of the General Conference Ministerial Association and distributes resource materials, coordinates meetings designed especially for ministers' wives, and helps to publish articles devoted to issues involving ministers' family lives in *Ministry* magazine.

SI's efforts are currently coordinated by Sharon Cress, who travels worldwide to meet with ministers' wives and edits the quarterly *Shepherdess International Journal*. The journal contains reprints of articles that deal with the problems and frustrations of being married to a minister by offering practical advice and encouragement.

At the end of each *Shepherdess International Journal*, a section titled "Shepherdess International News" reports on SI meetings and events held all over the world.

For instance earlier this year, ministers' wives in the Southern Asia Division completed classes on child evangelism. The women then

did visitation, offered prayer, and sang songs in homes. Seven persons were baptized as a result of their efforts.

More recently, pastoral wives in Russia met in Moscow for five days of meetings. For most of the 70-plus women, it was the first time they had had the chance to share about their lives as pastoral wives and to learn skills that would enhance their marriage partnership, family and church life, Shepherdess International News reports.

Spangler had met in previous years with smaller groups of women throughout the former Soviet Union, but because of religious restrictions, these meetings were termed "recipe exchanges."

Each of the pastoral wives who attended the recent meetings received not only special gift packets prepared by SI but also a personal Russian Bible, something most of the attendees did not own.

For more information about Shepherdess International, contact Sharon Cress at the General Conference, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

## El Shaddai ministry reaches inner-city Los Angeles

by Michelle Holm Wear

El Shaddai is one of many Hebrew names used to describe God. It is special because it calls to mind the fact that God manifests Himself as a provider for our needs. For Isabel Dickens, El Shaddai means even more; it encapsulates a message she communicates through mission in the heart of south central Los Angeles.

South central L.A. is a community with great needs, and for Isabel, turning God's providence into a mission occurs on two levels. The immediate needs of community members are met, while outreach and training of community members teaches them how to help themselves.

Operating from an old building near the University of Southern California (USC), Isabel counsels children, teenagers in crisis, married couples, and families. She is deeply concerned with the levels of exposure to violence, drugs, and sex these young children must endure. Dealing with these three issues is a consistent focus of her counseling efforts.

Isabel's outreach aims to equip community members with the skills needed to provide a better life for themselves and their loved ones. She teaches communication and listening skills and parenting, health and nutrition classes, as well as gang, AIDS, and teen pregnancy prevention classes. But Isabel is not content with keeping herself as the primary disseminator of information. She also trains volunteers to give the same classes and provide some counseling for others in the community.

Though her ministry is broad, Isabel does have a specific focus in the community. "My mission is open to the people in the community; however, my emphasis is between the ages of 10 and 30 years," she says.

Weaving its way through all her ministry is her strong emphasis on spiritual ministry. "The art of healing is useless without the teaching of the gospel and Christ's soon return," Isabel says. She encourages groups to meet for Bible study and prayer.

Isabel first became involved with this kind of ministry in 1965 when she started teaching the Adventist health message in evangelistic tent meetings every summer in the Los Angeles area. Her particular instruction included classes in nutrition, cooking, smoking cessation, and basic good health. It was while she was teaching in the tent meetings that she heard the call to implement and expand this ministry on a continual basis for the inner-city community. That was 10 years ago.

Isabel is uniquely qualified to run a pro-

gram such as El Shaddai. For the last 15 years, she has been a school nurse for the Los Angeles Unified School District. Prior to school nursing, Isabel was a mental health counselor at the San Gabriel Valley Hospital. A registered nurse, she graduated from Kansas General Hospital in 1956. Her class was the last un-integrated nursing class in the United States.

Isabel obtained her Masters in Nursing degree from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1973 with an emphasis in community mental health. She will complete requirements for the Family Nurse Practitioner program at USC in June 1994.

In addition to helping the community,



Isabel Dickens

Isabel raised four sons and now has 10 grandchildren. She has been a member of the University Seventh-day Adventist church in Los Angeles, the largest black church west of the Mississippi River.

At this time, Isabel asks for many prayers. Her biggest concern is for the building housing the El Shaddai ministry. It needs to be refurbished in order to become earthquake-proof. Because she funds the program through her own income and the contributions of others, Isabel is finding it very difficult to marshal the financial resources. She is not discouraged, though, because through all of her past experiences, God has provided.

Those interested in learning more about the needs of El Shaddai or making a donation can write to 3842 South Holbart Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90062.

—Michelle Holm Wear is a dentist practicing in Los Angeles.

## Gender Inclusiveness Commission Update

by Penny Miller

*Integrity* is a prerequisite to justice. *Justice* is a prerequisite to confidence. *Confidence* is a prerequisite to unity.

The Southeastern California Conference remains dedicated to these qualities in the life and mission of the church. It is not procrastinating in its pursuit of gender quality and inclusiveness.

At the 1992 Southeastern California Conference constituency session, delegates voted for equal ordinations for men and women within the conference jurisdiction. In 1993, the action continues to be supported by the constituency, the executive committee, and the conference administration. Recommendations for how to proceed were brought to the executive committee in October, with a recommendation for final action in November.

The Southeastern California Conference has also set in motion requests to the Pacific Union Conference and the North American Division seeking the empowerment of divisions to take the actions necessary to promote and enhance the gospel. These requests have been echoed by at least eight

other entities and include the affirmation through ordination of men and women, called by God to the ministry, as appropriate in their jurisdiction.

However, the road hasn't been easy. We've argued, despaired, hoped, and cheered one another on, and we have been particularly grateful for the support of the women on our Gender Inclusiveness Commission as well as other women in the church.

This past year, in addition to tenaciously pressing for appropriate follow up on the ordination issue in our conference, members of our Gender Inclusiveness Commission have enjoyed developing four papers for use with church members titled, "What Are the Positive Aspects of Ordaining Women?" "What Does the Scripture Say About Women?" "Do Church Policies Permit Local Conference Ordination?" and "Ordination in the Bible, the Early SDA Church, and Ellen White."

—Penny Miller is an associate professor at Loma Linda University School of Nursing and Graduate School.

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