

## **An Outline of the History of Seventh- day Adventists and the Ordination of Women**

*by Kit Watts\**

*Updated April 1995*

### **1844: Messenger for God.**

Ellen Harmon, 17, receives her first vision and commences a 70-year public ministry.

### **1857.**

D. Hewitt state that the force of Joel 2 supports women's public ministry.

*Review and Herald*, Oct. 15, 1857, p. 190.

*\*Vivianne Haenni provided valuable information about Adventist women in Europe. Josephine Benton's book, Called by God, documents historical data on several women ministers, including Hellen Williams, Minnie Day Sype, Lulu Russell Wightman, Anna Knight, Jessie Weiss Curtis, and Mary E. Walsh. Much of the research to update this document from 1900-1995 was done by Rebecca Brillhart and Cherie Rouse.*

**1858: James White challenges Review and Herald readers.**

Urges that Joel 2 be viewed inclusively, noting that men and man in Scripture “generally means both male and female.” *Review and Herald*, Jan. 7, 1858, p.69.

**1859.**

B. F. Robbins decries rules in any church that invoke 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2 to silence women. *Review and Herald*, Dec. 8, 1859, pp. 21, 22.

**1860.**

S. C. Welcome supported women's equality, claiming the “authority of divine revelation that male and female are one in Christ Jesus.” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 15, 1860, pp. 109, 110.

**1861.**

J. A. Mowatt declared it “a woman's right” to participate publicly in worship. *Review and Herald*, July 30, 1861, p. 65.

**1861: Editor Uriah Smith supports women's public ministry.**

He quoted with approval a long extract from the Portadown News, “Women as Preachers and Lecturers.” *Review and Herald*, July 30, 1861.

**1868.**

M. W. Howard said Bible women (like Priscilla) were viable role models for modern women. *Review and Herald*, Aug 18, 1868, p. 133.

**1868: First Adventist women evangelists.**

Sarah A. Hallock Lindsey begins meetings in New York state with her husband John. Ellen S. Edmonds Lane and her husband Elbert begin a long career as co-evangelists.

**1871: First woman General Conference treasurer.**

Adelia Patten Van Horn holds office from 1871-1873. She and her husband later become missionaries to the Walla Walla Valley.

**1872: First woman is licensed as a minister.**

Sarah A. Hallock Lindsey is recognized for her effective evangelism.

**1877.**

Minerva Jane Loughborough Chapman becomes General Conference treasurer, 1877-1883. Also editor of *Youth's Instructor*, 1875-1879, and 1884-1889.

**1878.**

Evangelist Ellen S. Edmonds Lane is a licensed minister, 1878-1889, working in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, and Tennessee.

**1879.**

Julia Owen, of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, is a licensed minister, 1878-1895.

**1879, January 2: Adventists exegete Bible in favor of women.**

“May Women Speak in Meeting,” *Review and Herald*, by J. N. Andrews. Briefly exegetes 1 Cor. 14:31-36 and 1 Tim. 2:12 and defends women's public role in preaching the gospel. Reprinted in *Adventist Review*, Feb. 4, 1988, p. 17.

**1879, May 29.**

In a *Review and Herald* article, “Women in the Church,” James White comments on 1 Cor. 14:34, 35 and 1 Cor. 11:3, and compares with New Testament and Old Testament practice involving women in leadership (Ex. 15:20, 21; Judges 4:4-10; Rom. 16:1-4, 6, 12; Acts 2:17; and Acts 21:8, 9.) Reprinted in *Adventist Review*, Feb. 4, 1988, p. 17-19.

**1881, December 5: General Conference Session motion to ordain women.**

At the 1881 General Conference (GC) session a motion is made to ordain women to gospel ministry. “*Resolved*, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry.” Reported in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1881. Item referred to the General Conference Committee.

**1884: Second SDA Yearbook lists several female licensed ministers:**

Kansas—Mrs. R. Hill, Mrs. H. Enoch. Michigan—Mrs. E. B. Lane, Mrs. G. K. Owen. Minnesota—Anna M. Johnson, Libbie Collins. Ellen G. White is listed among those given *ordination credentials* by the General Conference.

**1892, May 24: Biblical exegesis favors women.**

G. C. Tenney writes for *Review and Herald*, “Women's Relation to the Cause of Christ.” Regarding 1 Cor. 13:34,35, and 1 Tim. 2:12, he argues that it is “manifestly illogical and unfair to give to any passage of Scripture an unqualified radical meaning that is at variance with the main tenor of the Bible.” Reprinted in *Adventist Review*, Feb. 4, 1988, p. 19-21.

**1895, July 9: Ellen White calls for women's ordination service.**

In a *Review and Herald* article she says some women should be set apart for service in the church by “prayer and laying on of hands.”

**1897.**

Helen Williams receives license as an Adventist minister (1897-1914).  
Lulu Wightman receives license as an Adventist minister (1897-1907, 1909-1910. She is listed in 1908 as an ordained minister. (See Josephine Benton, *Called by God*, Smithsburg, MD: Blackberry Hill Publishers, p. 80.)

**1898, March 30.**

General Conference Committee issues ministerial *license* to Mrs. S. M. I. Henry.

**1898, December 6: First women's ministry department established.**

S. M. I. Henry outlines her plans for "a woman ministry" in a four-page supplement of the *Review and Herald*. She traveled and spoke widely in the denomination and her weekly feature for women appeared in the *Review*.

**1899, March 4: General Conference Session.**

S.M.I. Henry addressed the GC delegates in a sermon, focusing attention on the need for a women's ministry. She urged women first to serve in the home as Christian mothers and wives, and second, to minister to others who came within their sphere of influence.

**1900, January 6: Adventists ordain deaconesses.**

W. C. White participates in an ordination service for the Ashfield church in Sydney, Australia, that includes deaconesses. (The event apparently is not widely publicized and is not rediscovered until Arthur Patrick publishes an article in the *Adventist Review*, January 16, 1986.)

**1900, January 16.**

S. M. I. Henry dies. Former WCTU evangelist and founder of a women's ministry within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**1902.**

Minnie Day Sype receives license as an Adventist minister (1902-1956).  
As an evangelist raises up churches in the Oklahoma Territory and Iowa, at times performing marriages and baptisms.

**1904.**

Alma Bjugg, a captain in the Salvation Army who converts to Adventism, becomes the first native ministerial worker in Finland. She receives a ministerial license.

**1915, July 16: Ellen G. White dies.**

According to the *SDA Encyclopedia*, White was "cofounder of the SDA

church, writer, lecturer, and counselor to the church, who possessed what SDA's have accepted as the prophetic gift described in the Bible.”

**1918.**

Louise Kleuser pastors churches in New Haven, Connecticut.

**1921.**

Mary Walsh is an effective evangelist in New England. Licensed as a minister from 1921-1981 when the church decides not to allow even those women who have carried the credential in the past to continue doing so.

**1932.**

Maybelle Vandermark [Goransson] graduates from Washington Missionary College with a ministerial degree. Becomes associate pastor and teacher, assisting Lester Coon in a district of churches in Virginia (Potomac Conference).

**1933-1935: Woman serves as sole pastor.**

Maybelle Vandermark [Goransson] pastors a district of Virginia churches alone from 1933-1935. From 1940-1952 teaches Bible at Washington Missionary College and is assistant dean of women.

**1945.**

Jessie Weiss Curds receives license as an Adventist minister (1945-1972). As an evangelist raises up several churches in Pennsylvania.

**1948.**

Madelynn Jones [Haldeman] graduates with a degree in theology from Columbia Union College.

Ida Matilainen begins 40 years of evangelistic efforts in Kainuu, a sparsely populated area of Finland near the Arctic Circle.

**1949.**

Maybelle Vandermark [Goransson] completes an M.A. in archaeology, SDA Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.

Madelynn Jones [Haldeman] graduates from SDA Theological Seminary with an M.A. in theology and biblical theology.

**First woman sponsored to seminary.**

Lucille Harper [Knapp] graduates from SDA Theological Seminary with an M.A. in biblical languages. She is believed to be the first woman ever sponsored to attend the seminary (North Pacific Union).

**1950, May 3: General Conference Officers discuss ordination.**

“A. V. Olson explained ... A statement from the pen of Sister White, as found in the *Review and Herald* of July 9, 1895, has been understood by some

to provide for the ordination of certain sisters in church service. After some discussion, it was

“Agreed, To recommend to the General Conference Committee following the session that a small committee be appointed to study and report on this question.”—Minutes, GC Officers Meeting, May 3, 1950.

**1955.**

Leona G. Running graduates with an M.A. in Greek and Hebrew from the SDA Theological Seminary and joins the seminary faculty.

**1961.**

Lucille Harper Knapp joins the religion faculty of Walla Walla College.

**1964.**

Leona G. Running completes her Ph.D. in Semitic languages from Johns Hopkins University. Continues teaching at the SDA Theological Seminary.

**1966.**

Margaret Hempe joins University Church staff in Loma Linda as a Bible instructor.

**1968.**

Margarete Prange graduates with a degree in theology at Marienhoehe Seminary, Darmstadt, Germany. Becomes co-pastor in Bielefeld district 1970-1976.

**1968, March 28.**

Letter from W. Duncan Eva, President, Northern European Division to W. R. Beach, GC Secretary, requests counsel on ordaining women in Finland.

**1968, April 8: Officers discuss Northern European Division request for counsel on ordaining women.**

“The Northern European Division has requested counsel regarding ordination of women. The question has arisen in Finland. Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have not ordained women. Yet it is believed that the subject should be listed for the 1968 Council agenda. It was

“Agreed, to list on the agenda for the 1968 Autumn Council the subject of ordination of women.”—Minutes of GC Officers Meeting, April 8, 1968.

**1968, September 30: GC officers appoint committee to study ordination.**

“The Home and Overseas Officers briefly discussed the desirability of a study on the theology of ordination of women.” Committee appointed: H. W. Lowe, Raoul Dederen, M. K. Eckenroth.

**1970, June 5: GC officers discuss role of women.**

GC officers agreed to appoint “an adequate committee to consider this large topic . . . and to submit a report for consideration at the 1970 Autumn Council.”—Minutes, GC Officers Meeting, June 5, 1970.

**1972: First woman ordained as local elder.**

Josephine Benton ordained as local church elder. Brotherhood Church, Washington, D.C., by Potomac Conference and Columbia Union Conference presidents, W. G. Quigley and Cree Sandefur, respectively.

**1972, June 21; Far Eastern Division requests counsel about ordaining women.**

“The Far Eastern Division has requested counsel about ordaining women. The Biblical Research Committee has been assigned the task of studying 'the place of women in the church.' It is believed that the Far Eastern Division's request should be referred to the Biblical Research Committee for study and counsel. . .

“Agreed, to refer the Far Eastern Division request about ordaining women to the Biblical Research Committee.”—Minutes of GC Officers Meeting June 21, 1972.

**1973, July 19: Study on “the role of women” begins.**

GC committee establishes an *ad hoc* committee on the role of women in the church with the goal of studying women's ordination as well. W. J. Hackett, GC vice president, serves as chair; Gordon Hyde of the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) is secretary.

**1973.**

In Takoma Park, Maryland, Kit Watts joins the Sligo Church pastoral staff, as minister of publications (April 2) and Josephine Benton joins as an associate pastor (September 1). Benton is issued a ministerial license. Margaret Hempe at the University Church in Loma Linda, California, is acknowledged as a pastor. Margarete Prange's success as a pastor in Germany prompts her conference leaders to write GC leaders and ask about ordaining her as an elder, one factor that leads to Robert H. Pierson's calling of the Camp Mohaven Conference.

**1973, September: Camp Mohaven, Ohio.**

The *ad hoc* committee convenes at Camp Mohaven in Ohio [junior camp] and discusses 29 papers from men and women on the role of women in the church. The group included 13 men and 14 women.

**Recommends,** That women be ordained as local church elders, and those with theological training be hired as “associates in pastoral care” primarily in

multi-member pastoral staffs. Also, proposes a pilot program that would lead to the ordination of women in 1975.

**1973, October: Annual Council calls for “more study.”**

Annual Council votes to “receive” the Camp Mohaven report. It also votes “that continued study be given to the theological soundness of the election of women to local church offices which require ordination” and “that in areas receptive to such action, there be continued recognition of the appropriateness of appointing women to pastoral evangelistic work.”

**1974, October: Annual Council calls for “more study.”**

Annual Council votes to continue studying the theological issues. Says, “The time is not ripe nor opportune” to ordain women to gospel ministry.

**1975, March: Spring Meeting—ends 100-year policy of granting women ministerial licenses.**

ALSO adopts policy permitting the ordination of deaconesses and women elders.

Spring Meeting *approves women's ordination as deaconesses*. Also *permits* women to be *ordained as elders* if “the greatest discretion and caution” is exercised. Urges women to become Bible workers, or even assistant pastors, but notes that the church will grant them only a missionary license, thus ending 100 years of granting women ministerial licenses. (Emphasis added).

**BRI papers on women in the church.**

A set of 13 scholarly papers, based on the Camp Mohaven work, is prepared by the Biblical Research Institute but is not released to church members for study.

**1975.**

Mrs. W. H. Anderson (Central Union), Mary E. Walsh (Pacific Union), and Mrs. Josephine Benton (Potomac Conference) are among the last women listed in the *SDA Yearbook* as having ministerial licenses.

**1976, October 28.**

Biblical Research Institute director Gordon Hyde summarizes the theological work done by BRI on women since Camp Mohaven in *Review and Herald*. Asks, “If God has called a woman, and her ministry is fruitful, why should the church withhold its standard act of recognition [ordination]?”

**1976: European woman becomes sole pastor.**

Margarete Prange becomes pastor of the Galsenkirchen, Bottrop, Gladbeck, and Dorsten churches in East Germany.

**1977, February: First Adventist woman chaplain certified.**

Frances Osborne, a chaplain for Huguley Memorial Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas, is certified as a Fellow in the College of Chaplains at the annual national conference meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**1977, March: Spring Meeting—discussion of women's ordination dropped.**

General Conference president Robert H. Pierson tells Spring Meeting that the role of women is under continuing study and a report will be given at the 1977 Annual Council. However, when a poll of the world field is taken and shows a negative response, women's ordination is deleted from the Annual Council agenda.

**1977: Annual Council votes for Associates in Pastoral Care.**

The 1977 AC designates the term “Associates in Pastoral Care” to identify persons who are employed on pastoral staffs, but who are not in line for ordination (women).

**1977, September.**

The debate over ordaining women *elders* heats up in many churches, including Sligo Church in Takoma Park, Maryland, where many GC employees who oppose it are members.

**BRI papers on women released to Sligo Church.**

Responding to a request by James Londis and Kit Watts, NAD president Neal C. Wilson secures permission for Sligo Church to reproduce 13 papers which have been unanimously endorsed by the GC's Biblical Research Institute, and which find no theological obstacle to ordaining women. In October, Wilson and Raoul Dederen are among the guest speakers in a Wednesday night series as Sligo Church continues the debate.

**1978, January: Sligo Church fails to endorse ordination of women elders.**

Although 60% of Sligo Church members vote in favor of ordaining women as elders, the motion fails since the GC, Columbia Union, and Potomac Conference have stipulated a “clear majority” is necessary to settle the matter, (interpreted as a 66% or two-thirds vote).

**1979, October: Annual Council votes internships for women pastors, Bible instructors.**

AC provides special internship allotments for Bible Instructors and Associates in Pastoral Care to be distributed by the North American Division (NAD) beginning in 1980.

**Unordained males authorized to baptize in NAD.**

Changes in NAD Working Policy permit *unordained* seminary graduates

(male)] to baptize, etc., in their local church. New policy also allows them to qualify for certain U.S. tax benefits.

**1979, Fall: Women's newsletter published.**

Women in the metro Washington, D.C. area, led by Viveca Black, produce an *Update* of news for and about Adventist women. Forerunner of *The Adventist Woman*.

**1979-1982: American woman becomes sole pastor.**

Josephine Benton becomes pastor of the Rockville, Maryland, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**1980, April 17: GC Session in Dallas.**

**GC president calls for women's involvement.**

In his keynote address, as his fifth priority, Neal C. Wilson states that “the church must find ways to organize and utilize the vast potential represented by our talented, consecrated women.” He said, “I am not only urging that women be represented in the administrative structure of the church, but also that we harness the energies and talents of all the women so as to better accomplish the task of finishing the work assigned by our Lord.”

**1980: First Adventist woman earns Th.D. from SDA Theological Seminary.**

Margit Suring of Finland earns her Th.D. in theology and archaeology, from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

**1982: First women pastors sponsored for M.Div. degrees under the 1979 Annual Council's plan.**

Walla Walla theology graduates Becky Lacy and Collette Crowell are sponsored by their respective conferences (Southeastern California and Upper Columbia) for the M.Div. degree at the SDA Theological Seminary.

**1982: AAW organizes.**

The Association of Adventist Women (AAW) officially organizes with the goal to encourage Adventist women to achieve their full potential.

**1982.**

Lang Van, who holds a B.A. in theology from Collonges in France, teaches Bible to Cambodian refugees in Thailand, 1982-1984, pastors Cambodians living in the north of France (1984-1991), and moves to southeastern California to pastor refugees there.

### **1983.**

Helen Tyler, a chaplain with the New England Memorial Hospital, becomes the second Adventist woman to be certified as a Fellow in the College of Chaplains. She completed an M.Div. degree in 1975 and a D.Min. degree in 1978 from Boston University.

Olive J. Hemmings completes a B.A. in theology at West Indies College, and in 1989 an M.A. in New Testament studies at Andrews University. She teaches religion at West Indies College.

### **1983: NAD Women's Commission established.**

Responding to a proposal that originated with Oillie Stafford and Jan Daffern, Warren Banfield, director for NAD'S Office of Human Relations, receives approval to establish the NAD Women's Commission. Alice Smith is the first chairperson. (She is succeeded in 1986 by Thesba Johnston.) The commission is instructed by the GC *not* to discuss women's ordination.

### **1984, March: Women pastors perform baptisms in NAD.**

Potomac Conference Committee votes to permit eight local elders to baptize. Three are women in pastoral roles—Jan Daffern at Sligo Church, Frances Wiegand at Beltsville Church, and Marsha Frost in Virginia. The action precipitates trauma, particularly at the Beltsville, Maryland, church where many GC officers attend. Potomac Conference is chastised for defying GC authority and policy.

### **1984, July: Second annual AAW conference.**

Dialogue with church leaders sought but rebuffed. BRI papers on women released after nine-year wait.

The Women of Mission Conference takes place at Andrews University. Early in 1984, Dr. Richard Leshner, BRI director, okayed the release of the nine-year-old BRI study papers on women (which continued the work begun at Camp Mohaven). But when he is elected as Andrews University president, his successor at BRI, Dr. George Reid, rescinds the decision. Not until one week before the conference is the decision reversed.

### **The first 100 copies of the 1975 BRI papers on the role of women are officially edited and released to interested church members.**

(Julia Neuffer, veteran editor of the *SDA Commentary* series, assists BRI in preparing the final edited version.)

### **1984, August: Women pastors ordered to stop baptizing in NAD.**

#### **New study on women's ordination promised.**

The entire Potomac Conference Committee is summoned to Washington, D.C., to meet with the GC officers, and asked to rescind their action that permitted women pastors to baptize (as local elders). The GC promises to renew a study of the ordination issue.

**1984, October: Annual Council.**

**Women elders' ordination policy reaffirmed.**

Annual Council *reaffirms* 1975 Spring Meeting decision that women may be ordained as local elders. Votes to “advise each division that it is free to make provisions as it may deem necessary for the election and ordination of women as local church elders.” Thus the provision is extended from NAD to the world field.

**Commission on the Role of Women in the Church voted.**

Annual Council also votes to call a Commission on the Role of Women in the Church, with representatives from each division, to study women's ordination. Vows to settle the issue “definitively” at the 1985 GC session.

**1984: First Adventist black woman becomes hospital chaplain.**

Wanda Grimes Davis becomes a staff chaplain in the Regional Medical Center in Memphis, Tennessee. She wanted to become a military chaplain but could not because the U.S. armed forces required that all chaplains be ordained by the denominations they represent.

**1984.**

Sally Kiasiong Andriamiarisoa, having earned a B.A. in theology, becomes associate pastor in Mauritius, 1984-1986.

**1985. March 26-28: Washington, D.C.**

**Commission on the Role of Women in the Church—I.**

A 65-member commission meets in Washington, D.C., including 15 women, and decides against “definitive” decision on women's ordination.

Recommends,

(a) *more study*, especially on Pauline material and church history, to be reviewed by a representative group in 1988, with actions to be brought to 1989 Annual Council;

(b) *affirmative action* for women in church leadership roles not requiring ordination;

(c) *reform of present ordination practices*—that men not be ordained unless in true ministerial work;

(a) *further study on the status of women pastors* in NAD to be considered at the 1985 Annual Council.

Spring Meeting accepts the report.

**1985, June 6.**

Four deaconesses are ordained in the Geneva, Switzerland, church. The action comes as a culmination of a nine-month study and hearing speakers G. Steveny, J. C. Verrechia, V. Haenni, E. Zuber, and F. Hugh. The Swiss/French conference president asks the senior pastor in Geneva to stop the ordination of women, believing that the Euro-African Division has not authorized ordination

of women to any post and will not until the world church comes to an agreement.

**1985, July 4-7.**

Women's ordination discussed openly for the first time during the first French-speaking Adventist Women's Convention.

**1985, July: GC Session in New Orleans.**

**Votes for affirmative action, more study on ordination.**

GC delegates in New Orleans accept the recommendations from the 1985 Spring Meeting (above) to give further study to women's ordination as ministers, to reform ordination practices for men, and to provide "affirmative action" by placing qualified women in leadership roles that do not require ordination.

**Deaconess ordination contested.**

However, a motion to update the *Church Manual* to reflect the church's 1975 decision to permit the ordination of *deaconesses* is protested by Hedwig Jemison, and tabled, although the policy is not nullified.

**1985, October : Annual Council.**

**Annual Council discriminates between men and women pastors.**

Annual Council rejects the NAD recommendation that women pastors with seminary training be allowed to baptize and solemnize marriages as young men (in the U.S.) with the same qualifications have been doing since 1979. Annual Council states that women may work as ministers but should not expect ordination.

**GC Women's Ministries Advisory (WMA) Committee established.**

In an action to educate the church on acceptable leadership roles for Adventist women, Annual Council appoints **Betty Holbrook** as coordinator of Women's Ministries, in addition to her work as director of the GC's Home and Family Service. An advisory committee of women employed at the GC headquarters is set up to assist her. Its members include: Shirley Burton, Jocelyn Fay, Beverly Rumble, and Marie Spangler. Soon after, Elizabeth Sterndale and Marjorie Felder are added. WMA is specifically asked to encourage denominational editors to include positive articles about women in their publications. NAD Women's Advisory Representative.

Two days later **Elizabeth Sterndale** is appointed as Women's Advisory Representative for NAD in addition to her full-time responsibilities in the NAD Health and Temperance Department.

**1985.**

Lydia Justiano is chosen chairperson of the Women's Ministries Committee for the South American Division.

**1986.**

Three women's groups at the GC/NAD become more public in their work

to educate the church on various women's issues, (but are told not to discuss women's ordination):

- (1) *Shepherdess International* (specific support group for pastors' wives);
- (2) the revitalized NAD *Women's Commission* sponsored by the Office of Human Relations (which held its first Town Meeting at Andrews University in the summer; **NADWC also agrees to gather material for a book on various women's issues**; and
- (3) the GC Women's Ministries Advisory Committee, which began encouraging denominational papers to publish more news about women.

**1986, January 16: Deaconess' ordination attested among early Adventists.**

*Adventist Review* publishes evidence that W. C. White ordained *deaconesses* at the Ashfield church in Sydney, Australia, on January 6, 1900. This transcends objections raised on ordaining deaconesses at 1985 GC session.

**1986, February 8: Hispanic women ordained as elders in NAD.**

Robert H. Carter, president of the Lake Union Conference, ordains three women elders at the Spanish church in Berrien Springs, Michigan: Marcia Gomez, Antonia Elenes, and Vita Marquez. The church business meeting had already voted overwhelmingly in favor of their ordination by 250-4.

**1986, March.**

The Seventh-day Adventist Healthcare Chaplains Association meeting in Denver, Colorado (during the National Conference of the College of American Chaplains) urges the hiring of more women in ministry.

**1986, April 5; Church at Andrews University fails to approve women elders.**

Pioneer Memorial Church members (Andrews University) vote in favor of ordaining women as local elders by 56 to 44%, but the motion fails because the church board had stipulated a 60% majority to settle the issue. The vote comes after a series of Wednesday night studies including speakers Richard Davidson, Patricia Mutch, and Russell Staples. Samuele Bacchiocchi emerges as an outspoken opponent of women's ordination.

**1986, May 2-4.**

The 15th annual meeting of the West Coast Religion Teachers' Conference, meeting at Pacific Union College, vote 40-0 (with one abstention) to support women's ordination.

**1986, Fall: Southeastern California Conference votes for equality.**

SECC votes to treat unordained men and women equally regarding the issue of performing baptisms. The effect of the vote, since the church allows

unordained males who are pastors to baptize, is to give women that privilege also.

**1986, October 25.**

The Newbold College Church in England ordains its first women elders- Aulikki Nahkola and Cynthia Bent.

**1986, December: NAD Bible teachers support women's ordination.**

Roger Dudley of Andrews University reports that 83% of Adventist Bible teachers in North America support women's ordination. Dudley surveyed the religion faculties of 11 NAD colleges and the SDA Theological Seminary. The number of questionnaires returned is 94 out of 131.

**1986.**

Yvonne Oster becomes church pastor in Lintioping, Sweden, 1986-1989.

**1986, December 20: Women pastors resume baptizing in NAD.**

Pastor Margaret Hempe baptizes two candidates in the University Church Loma Linda, CA, at the request of the pastoral staff and more than 100 members' of the University Church board.

**1987.**

Helen Tyler is certified as a Fellow by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

**1987, February: Bacchiocchi goes into print.**

Samuele Bacchiocchi publishes *Women in the Church*, a book that strongly opposes women's ordination.

**1987, May 1-3.**

The West Coast Religion Teachers reaffirm their call for women's ordination during their meeting at Walla Walla College. In particular, they name Madelynn Haldeman and Margaret Hempe as suitable candidates.

**1987, May 21: PMC votes for women elders.**

Members of Pioneer Memorial Church (Andrews University) vote to elect and ordain women elders by a 62.5% majority. Prior to the vote, members had received a 12-page document containing two position papers, for and against Senior pastor Dwight Nelson reverses his prior stand against women's ordination.

**1987, June 4: Study shows that age affects opinion on women's ordination.**

Roger Dudley publishes data in the *Adventist Review* showing that 46%

of NAD pastors favor ordination of women to the gospel ministry. Age is a factor. The majority of those under age 50 favor it, and the majority of those over 50 oppose it.

**1987, August: Adventist Bible teachers in world church support women's ordination.**

Roger Dudley reports in *Ministry Magazine* on a study of religion teachers throughout the Seventh-day Adventist world church. Overall, 69% agreed that it was appropriate for women who have demonstrated their calling to ministry to be ordained as gospel ministers.

**1987, October 7-9: NAD sponsors first gathering of women in ministry.**

Of approximately 40 women in ministry in NAD, 23 attend the first meeting for SDA female chaplains and pastors coordinated by Bob Dale, assistant to NAD President Charles E. Bradford. Facilitator of the meeting is Elizabeth Sterndale.

**1987, October 8-11: Dialogue between church leaders and women facilitated by AAW.**

During its 5th annual conference, AAW succeeds in organizing the first open dialogue between women and church leaders on such women's issues as pastoral ministry, church leadership, and ordination. Among those participating: Neal C. Wilson, Charles E. Bradford, Warren Banfield, A. C. McClure, and George Reid.

**1988, January 22-24: AWI organizes.**

The Adventist Women's Institute forms during a meeting at McCormack's Creek State Park (Indiana) and officially incorporates in California on January 27 with Fay Blix as its chair. The group determines to pursue for women full and equal participation in the church.

**1988, February: Audio tape, "Our Stories."**

AAW produces a 67-minute tape and printed 10-page booklet entitled *Adventist Women in Ministry: Our Stories*, featuring women pastors and chaplains from Sweden, Norway, Korea, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the United States. The material is sent to the 77 members preparing for the GC Commission on the Role of Women in the Church.

**1988, February 4.**

The **Adventist Review** publishes its first "AR Seminar," focusing on women in early Adventism, including reprints of articles defending women's public roles by James White and J. N. Andrews.

**1988, March.**

Neal Wilson appoints Karen Flowers to replace Betty Holbrook, retiring chair of the GC Women's Ministries Advisory Committee.

**1988, March 24-27: Washington, D.C.**

**Commission on the Role of Women in the Church-II.**

80 persons (including 19 women) from the world church meet at GC headquarters in Washington, D.C.

They recommend:

Further study is needed before a decision can be made on ordaining women.

**Women testify to commission members.**

For the first time, women pastors are invited to speak for themselves to the commission: Delores Robinson, pastor from Southeastern California Conference; Penny Shell, chaplain at Thorek Hospital in Chicago; and Eva Nora de Monroy, from Mexico. (Marsha Frost, pastor from Potomac Conference was a commission member as she had also been in 1985.) Several Adventist women teachers are also invited to speak against ordination including: Mercedes Dyer Loretta Johns, and Laurice Durrant.

**1988, April: TEAM organizes.**

Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry is founded in Maryland specifically to work toward the ordination of candidates to the gospel ministry regardless of race, social class, or gender. Patricia Habada is chairperson.

**1988, May 10,11: NAD calls for end to discriminatory practices.**

NAD leaders call for an end to discriminatory policies affecting Adventist women in ministry. During the meeting in Loma Linda, California they vote unanimously their objection to the current discrepancies in how the church treats men and women who have the same training and qualifications.

**1988, May.**

The Potomac Conference echoes the NAD stand and votes to cease discriminating against women in ministry and permit them, along with unordained males, to baptize and marry in the local church.

**1988.**

Madelynn Jones Haldeman graduates from the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University, the second woman to earn a Th.D. there She is a member of the religion faculty of Loma Linda University (now La Sierra University), Riverside, California campus.

**1988, Summer.**

The Oregon Conference establishes a Women's Ministries Department,

chaired by Marge Moreno.

**1988, October: Study finds that nearly 1,000 women elders serve in NAD.**

The Institute of Church Ministry (at Andrews University) presents its survey reporting on the status of women elders. Researchers Carole Kilcher and Gan-Theow Ng find there are 960 ordained women elders serving the 3,036 churches alongside 14,495 male elders. Seventy-eight percent of those churches having women elders felt they strengthened the church. The survey also revealed that women function as elders in churches of every size and racial and cultural background.

**1988, November 1.**

Newbold College religion faculty pledges support for women entering theological study and seeking a career in pastoral ministry.

**1988: Chinese woman pastor performs baptisms.**

Mrs. Hui Ying Zhou is reported to have baptized at least 200 persons in Wuxi, China. She attracts up to 1,000 to Sabbath services.

**1989, January 29: Gender Inclusiveness Task Force organized.**

Delegates to the Southeastern California Conference's (SECC) special constituency meeting establish a 12-member task force "to plan and implement a broad spectrum of programs and materials on gender inclusiveness in family and church." The action also states that it is the will of SECC to ordain women in ministry as soon as possible.

**1989, March 14.**

Seventh-day Adventist Healthcare Chaplains Association meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, calls the church "into a full recognition, by ordination, of the ministry of women."

**1989, April 30: Ohio Conference wants to ordain woman.**

The Ohio Conference executive committee endorses Pastor Leslie Bumgardner as a candidate for ordination.

**1989, May 4: Columbia Union endorses woman for ordination.**

The Columbia Union Conference executive committee endorses Pastor Leslie Bumgardner as a candidate for full ordination no earlier than August of 1990 on the basis that it is "morally right and theologically correct."

**1989, May 21: SECC calls for women's ordination.**

The Southeastern California Conference constituents pass a resolution (279-179) mandating that local qualified women pastors be considered for

ordination no sooner than August 1990.

**1989, June 7.**

The Pacific Union Conference executive committee votes a resolution urging the General Conference “to eliminate gender as a consideration for ordination to the gospel ministry.” They add that “we endorse the ordination of qualified women to the gospel ministry in divisions, unions, and conferences where deemed helpful and appropriate.”

**1989, mid-June: NAD union presidents endorse women's ordination.**

NAD union presidents vote unanimously to send an endorsement of women's ordination to the Commission on the Role of Women meeting in Cohutta Springs, Georgia, “in those divisions where it would be deemed helpful and appropriate.”

**1989, mid-June: NAD Officers resolution.**

By secret ballot, NAD officers endorse a resolution similar to the one passed by the Pacific Union Conference by a vote of 5-1.

**1989, June: First black woman becomes sole pastor of a church.**

Hyveth Williams, previously associate pastor at Sligo Church, becomes senior pastor of the Boston Temple, Boston, Massachusetts.

**1989, July 12-18: Cohutta Springs, Georgia.**

**Commission on the Role of Women in the Church—III.**

Votes no ordination for women; some pastoral privileges.

Commission members vote 56-11 in favor of a controversial two-pronged recommendation brought to them by the division presidents and GC officers present.

Recommends:

- (a) Women not be ordained to gospel ministry, and
- (b) that divisions may authorize qualified women in ministry to perform baptisms and marriages.

The commission has representatives from every world division, and includes 17 women. (Three divisions decline to send women: Inter-America, South America, and Eastern Africa.)

**Survey of women in leadership.**

Karen Flowers, GC Women's Ministries Advisory coordinator, shares results of an international survey documenting the concerns of Adventist women in leadership.

**The women attendees make recommendations.**

Women commissioners caucus and submit a document to the commission calling for positive actions toward Adventist women including:

- (a) equality and career opportunities,
- (b) full-time women's ministries coordinators,
- (c) inclusive language in church documents,
- (d) affirmative action bringing women into positions of leadership that do not require ordination,
- (e) accountability for progress toward these goals.

**1989, July 23.**

Under the leadership of Rosa Banks, newly elected director of the Office of Human Relations (OHR), the NAD Women's Commission adopts a mission statement and goals. NADWC operates through the sponsorship of OHR.

**1989, September 28: Women leaders support women's ordination.**

A summary of Karen Flower's international survey of Adventist women in leadership is published in the *Adventist Review*. Sixty-five percent of the women surveyed feel that the associate pastor of a local church should be ordained, and 74% feel it would be appropriate for women to serve in this capacity. The survey identified 1,872 women working as administrators, departmental directors and associates, pastors, chaplains, and Bible instructors. Of these, 875 responded to the survey.

**1989, October 7: “Celebration of Equality.”**

TEAM sponsors the event in Sligo Church which features Charles E. Bradford, Hyveth Williams, Madelynn Haldeman, Duncan and Wilmore Eva, Harold Camacho, singer Pat Taylor, and TV personality and Adventist pastor Clifton Davis.

**1989, October: Annual Council.**

Delegates vote 187-97 in favor of accepting the two-pronged recommendation from the Commission on the Role of Women in the Church, which met in Cohutta Springs—rejecting women's ordination, but permitting qualified women to baptize and perform marriages (See above.)

**A nod toward women's concerns—but no promises:**

Delegates also vote to “record our appreciation for” the women's recommendations from Cohutta Springs, as revised by the GC officers, and state that they “encourage” each organizational entity and institution to “give study” to the concerns “so as to achieve the spirit and purpose of this proposal.” They also recommend that women make up at least 25% of committees and boards “in those categories of membership where a sufficient number of women are eligible for membership.”

**1989, November 29: Women's studies degree.**

The faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences at Andrews University

votes to establish the first women's studies program in Adventist colleges. Classes for the minor begin in Fall 1990.

**1990, January 1.**

Ramona Perez Greek begins service as coordinator of the NAD Women's Commission, succeeding Thesba Johnston. The commission adopts a five-year plan with goals and objectives. Volunteer commissioners are in place in every union in NAD and in most conferences.

**1990, February 23-28: Chaplains vote support, again.**

Seventh-day Adventist Healthcare Chaplains Association meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, votes strong support for ordaining women to ministry.

**1990, April: SECC educates constituents.**

The Gender Inclusiveness Task Force of Southeastern California Conference produces

(1) "Equals in Service," a slide program featuring male and female theology students seeking a place in the Adventist ministry.

(2) "What's Good for the Gospel," a video encouraging women's full participation in church life and ministry.

(3) A pamphlet for readers of the *Pacific Union Recorder*, authored by John Brunt, entitled "The Ordination of Women: A Bible Perspective."

**1990, April 8; Religion teachers vote support, again.**

The West Coast Religion Teachers vote unanimously to reaffirm their commitment to women's ordination and request the GC session delegates "to take no action that would either forbid or compel the ordination of women in the gospel ministry in any part of the world."

**1990, June; AAW documents women in ministry.**

The *Adventist Woman*, vol. 9. No. 3-4, documents the education, training, and public ministry of 62 women from 12 different countries, and includes photographs of them.

**1990, July 5-14: GC Session in Indianapolis.**

**Delegates deny ordination for women.**

In Indianapolis, GC delegates vote 1,173 to 377 to accept the 1989 commission's and 1989 AC recommendation that women not be ordained at this time.

**Women may perform baptisms and marriages in some divisions.**

By a vote of 776 to 494 the delegates choose to update the *Church Manual* to reflect the policy adopted at the 1989 Annual Council, which permits women to perform marriages in divisions which so authorize.

**1990, August: New books on women.**

Throughout 10 years of discussion on women's ordination, the General Conference officers had urged the Review and Herald and Pacific Press not to publish books on the topic. Several books were stopped in manuscript form, and the authors sought alternative publishers. Bacchiocchi self-published in February 1987. In 1990 two additional books were published:

(1) *Called by God*, by Josephine Benton (Blackberry Hill Publishers Route 2, Box 121, Smithsburg, MD 21783), 240 pages. It devotes a chapter each to each of six Adventist women in public ministry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

(2) *Women, Church, God: A Socio-Biblical Study*, by Caleb Rosado (Loma Linda University Press, Riverside, California), 173 pages. Addresses such issues as Jesus and the patriarchal system, "Is God Male?" and headship theology.

**1990, September 19: NAD Committee establishes Office of Women's Ministries.**

Elizabeth Sterndale named as director of the new office.

**1990, September 24: Leaders of women's groups meet.**

Thirty-five women, most of whom are members of AWI, TEAM, AAW, and the SECC Gender Inclusiveness Task Force meet in Addison, Pennsylvania, and issue a joint statement responding to the 1990 GC decision to deny ordination to women. The statement calls the church to implement equal opportunity and affirmative action for women, and to ordain women in divisions where the move would be culturally acceptable. They also discuss an Adventist Women's Coalition. A 17-member steering committee, chaired by Helen Thompson, agrees to work on proposals.

**1990, October: Annual Council. GC also establishes Office of Women's Ministries.**

On October 4, AC adopts President Robert Folkenberg's recommendation to establish an Office of Women's Ministries. Rose Otis is subsequently named director.

**1990, October 21: SECC sidesteps ordination issue.**

SECC constituents accept a recommendation by conference president L. Stephen Gifford to establish a Commission on Justice, by a vote of 370 to 128.

According to the recommendation, the SECC executive committee is to:

- (a) "lead out in a strong concerted program in the recruitment, hiring, education, placement, and support of women in ministry," and
- (b) to work closely with denominational leaders "to facilitate the ordination of all qualified ministerial candidates without gender discrimination" and to report back on these efforts at the 1992 constituency meeting.

The purpose of the *Commission on Justice* is to: “fulfill the church's goals of racial, ethnic, and gender equality.”

SECC constituents reject a motion, endorsed by the Gender Inclusiveness Task Force, to ordain women to gospel ministry by a vote of 440 to 274. A progress report is requested in 1992.

**1990: New GC president stalls discussion of women's ordination.**

Robert H. Folkenberg advises denominational editors that discussing women's ordination is off limits.

**1990: V. Norskov Olsen publishes study of ordination.**

Olsen's book, *Myth and Truth: Church, Priesthood and Ordination* a scholarly study, supports ordination of women.

**1991. Australian women publish research report.**

Four women: Jennifer Knight, Pamela Clifford, Merolyn Coombs, and Linette Lock, conduct research to study women's perceptions of the SDA Church in Australia and New Zealand, and publish a 125-page report *The Adventist Women in the Secular World: Her Ministry and Her Church*. Report pleads for change.

**1992: SECC wants ordination plan.**

Constituents ask executive committee to devise a plan for ordaining women within its jurisdiction and to conduct all future ordinations of men and women uniformly.

**1992: Review and Herald publishes book, *A Woman's Place*.**

In the planning stage by the NAD Women's Commission and the Office of Human Relations since 1986, a book by 11 women authors surveys issues for women in the church and society. Edited by Rosa Taylor Banks, Office of Human Relations director.

**1992: TEAM begins scholarship program.**

Three women in ministry receive the first scholarships to support their graduate studies in theology. This program grows from small grants to an international program with gifts of \$2500 or more to worthy recipients.

**1993: NAD leaders call for ordination.**

At a January meeting, 88% of the NAD ministerial directors attending along with the senior pastors of college churches, ask NAD to authorize and promote women's ordination on a regional basis.

**1993. February: Healthcare chaplains elect first woman president.**

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Healthcare Chaplains Association elect Penny Shell president. For two years each she will be president-elect, then president, then past president.

**1993: AAW commemorates 20th anniversary of Camp Mohaven.**

A special issue of the *Adventist Woman* marks 20 years since the Seventh-day Adventist Church convened the Camp Mohaven Council on the Role of Women. All the original Mohaven recommendations are published—alongside the actions that the 1974 Annual Council actually took. Three men and four women who were members of the Mohaven group share their perspectives. (Historic photo of the group included).

**1993: Women's ordination kept off the agenda.**

Delegates find women's ordination, which has been under discussion behind closed doors only, was removed from potential discussion by Annual Council by the GC president. It is reported that he hopes to prevent conflict and polarization by waiting until 1994.

**1994: SDA Theological Seminary professor publishes anti-ordination book.**

Raymond Holmes, retired seminary professor, publishes *the Tip of an Iceberg*, [sic] in which he argues that the authority of the Bible, and all of Adventist's unique beliefs, are threatened if Scripture is interpreted to allow women's ordination. The self-published book is widely distributed. Endorsed by several highly placed SDA leaders, the book gives the appearance of being the church's "official position."

**1994: GC president talks to SECC.**

In communication with Southeastern California Conference leaders, Robert Folkenberg discusses ordaining women and expresses hope that a consensus can be secured among division leaders.

**1994: SECC holds off on ordination.**

Ready to move ahead in ordaining women, SECC votes to postpone and to take up the issue again at a November 1994 meeting to determine a course of action should Folkenberg not get consensus at Annual Council.

**1994, September 22: Atlantic Union Conference Executive Committee (NAD) votes statement in support of women's ordination.**

Southern New England Conference President Charles Case voted against the statement and asked that his name be excluded and thus recorded.

**1994, September 23-24: Sligo celebrates women in ministry.**

All eight women who have been on the pastoral staff since 1973 participate in a reunion. The program concluded with a “procession of light” on Sabbath afternoon. Marking the church’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1844, and the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Camp Mohaven, candles were carried for 150 women in ministry as their names were read in a special ceremony. Eighteen women carried their own candles.

**1994, October: AAW publishes second list of women in ministry.**

Photos and stories of 90 women in ministry make up the October/November issue (Vol. 13, No. 5) of the *Adventist Woman*. Included are women from Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, the Baltic Union, Russia, Norway, Finland, and the U.S.

**1995, April: Adventist publications renew discussion of women.**

*Ministry* Magazine publishes issue that discusses ordination of women and decision-making in the church.

**1995, April: Pro-ordination book is published.**

TEAM Press publishes *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, in which 14 prominent authors and scholars support ordination of women.

Direct corrections or additional historical information to:

Kit Watts, Assistant Editor

*Adventist Review*

12501 Old Columbia Pike

Silver Spring, Maryland, 20904, U.S.A.