

**Documentary Analysis of the  
Role of Women in the  
SDA Church**

Selected by Bert Haloviak

WOMAN MEMBER OF HUSBAND-WIFE TEAM SERVES ESSENTIALLY AS LOCAL PASTOR--NATURE OF MINISTRY WHEN ADVENTISM LACKED STATIONARY PASTORS: "Iowa seems to be a very encouraging field of labor....The way is open for Bro Cornell to labor successfully in this part of the State. Sister Cornell has well acted her part. The mode of warfare is something as follows: Bro Cornell goes out alone into a new place, perhaps puts up at the tavern, preaches a few days, when friends appear to invite him to their houses; and when the work is well under way, Sister C[ornell] joins her husband, and labors from house to house as they are invited. And when Bro Cornell's work is done, it is a good place for Sister C to remain and defend the truth in private conversations, and bear responsibilities of the work in the midst of young disciples. In this way both can bear a part in the good work." [James White, RH, March 8, 1860, emphasis supplied.]

JAMES WHITE ANALYZES THE QUESTION OF SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY AND CHURCH POLITY ISSUES: "If it be asked, Where are your plain texts of scripture for holding church property legally? we reply, The Bible does not furnish any....The church is left to move forward in the great work, praying for divine guidance, acting upon the most efficient plans for its accomplishment. We believe it safe to be governed by the following

RULE

All means which, according to sound judgment, will advance the cause of truth, and are not forbidden by plain scripture declarations, should be employed." [James White, "Making Us a Name," RH, April 26, 1860.]

JAMES WHITE AND EARLY CONCEPTS OF ORDINATION OF WOMEN: "My views and feelings are that the minister's wife stands in so close a relation to the work of God, a relation which so affects him for better or worse, that she should, in the ordination prayer, be set apart as his helper." [James White, RH, Aug 13, 1867.]

MINISTERIAL REFORM IN SDA CHURCH IN 1870s: It appears to have been Ellen White counsels that pushed the church toward major ministerial reform. Mrs White made significant addresses concerning ministry at both the 1870 and 1871 GC sessions and sought to move the church from its preoccupation with a debating ministry toward more pastoral concerns. In the aftermath of Mrs White's urging for a more "qualified" ministry, the session established a committee to outline a course of study for ministers. In addition, a ministerial lecture course for both men and women who were planning ministerial labor was held after

the 1871 session. It is interesting that the price of membership in the Minister's Lecture Association was \$5 for men and \$3 for women. James White outlined the purpose of the ministerial lecture course: "There are a hundred young men and young women [emphasis supplied] who should attend a thorough course of lectures" that would "qualify them to teach the word to others." [James White, RH, Jan 10, 1871.]

Apparently reacting to the Ellen White admonitions, the 1871 GC session delegates voted that "means should be taken to encourage and properly instruct men and women for the work of teaching the word of God." The resolution called for a course "to instruct our devoted young men and young women, all over the land, in the principles of present truth, and the best methods of teaching them to the people." [Actions of the 1871 GC Session.]

In 1873, George Butler, president of the General Conference, defined the purpose of the ministerial lectures as "to furnish instruction in the theory of our faith to those who wish to enter into the ministry immediately" and in that same issue of the Review the General Conference Committee told why the SDA church was then allowing its women to receive training and licensing to the ministry: "It is well known to most of the readers of the Review that our cause stands in great want of laborers properly qualified to present our views to the people who are everywhere ready to listen to them." The central administrative body of the church "believed there are those among us who have ability sufficient, could they have the proper instruction" to become successful evangelists of the SDA message. [George Butler, RH, March 25, 1873; General Conference Committee, "Ministerial Lectures," RH, March 25, 1873.] This appears to have been the earliest attempt to provide formal training for the ministry. It would be several years before Battle Creek College was established for that purpose. About this time, the New York-Pennsylvania Conference licensed Sarah Lindsey, who was thus officially qualified to preach and hold evangelistic meetings. We thus see by 1871, an apparent widening of the SDA ministerial doors to include women in their own right. They received training and were licensed as ministers.

SDA WOMEN AND THE MINISTERIAL LICENSE: Over 20 SDA women were licensed as ministers during the period from the 1870s to the ending of the 19th century. Although the church did not agree on the question of their ordination, they were considered within the ministry of the church; they were not lay members. Women were licensed and paid by the local conferences or the General Conference from tithe funds. They followed the same path to the ministry as that followed by men. The fact that some women were licensed for seven or eight years consecutively indicates that the local conferences considered them successful in ministry.

ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF BATTLE CREEK COLLEGE [James White, "Dangers and Duties of Our Time," RH, Feb. 17, 1876]: "We speak of our

first College, where MEN AND WOMEN are being qualified to teach the present truth in our own and in other countries."

EVIDENCE THAT THE QUESTION OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY IS SURFACING--W. C. White question to Stephen Haskell on role of women in Biblical times [SNH to WCW, Dec. 13, 1878]: Besides writing about women as prophetesses, Haskell observed: "Paul has very much to say about women laboring in the gospel, Rom. 16. The word SERVANT in verse 1 signifies deaconess. Anyway this woman had some church business which Paul exhorts the Roman church to assist her in. Bloomfield in his notes says, 'She seems to have been in the company of those who conveyed this epistle though not herself the bearer of it. According to the constitution of the primitive church, there was an order of women discharging part of the public business of the church consisting of two kinds, (1) Elders women presiding over and superintending the morals of the other female Christians; (2) Deaconesses who discharge some of the offices of the ministry, as baptizing the female converts; and who also collected and distributed the contributions for the relief of the sick and poor females, besides other offices less important.' [Haskell appears to be quoting Bloomfield to this point.] However true all this may be it is evident, (1) That she traveled from Corinth to Rome in company with others; (2) Her title servant of DEACONESS and the expression shows she had BUSINESS some way connected with the cause; (3) She needed their cooperation....There are at least 6 women mentioned in this chapter as laborers. Three in the 12th verse which LABORED much in the Lord. Those who are called LABORERS AND HELPERS are spoken of as addicting themselves to the work of the ministry, 1 Cor. 16:10,15,16."

ELLEN WHITE AND 19th CENTURY CONCEPT OF MINISTRY AND WHY WOMEN WERE VITAL: "Women can be the instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. It was Mary that first PREACHED a risen Jesus....Those who engage with the Son of God in his work, be they ever so aspiring, can have no greater, no holier work than this. If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this holy mission their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of PREACHING the truth....We are lacking in deeds of sympathy and benevolence, in sacred and social MINISTERING to the needy, the oppressed, and the suffering. Women who can work are needed now, women who are not self-important, but meek and lowly of heart, who will work with the meekness of Christ wherever they can find work to do for the SALVATION OF SOULS." [Address and Appeal, Setting Forth the Importance of Missionary Work," RH, Jan 2, 1879]

ELLEN WHITE KNEW OF AND APPROVED THE LICENSING OF WOMEN MINISTERS: "The committee on credentials and licenses reported, recommending that the credentials of J. N. Ayers, J. H. Cook, C. F. Stevens, J. Lamont, L. D. Santee, and Smith Sharp be renewed,

and that W. E. Dawson be ordained and receive credentials; which recommendations were adopted, excepting in the case of W. E. Dawson, whose ordination was deferred upon his request. BRO. BUTLER AND SISTER WHITE SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH ON THE SUBJECT OF LICENSES....The committee on credentials and licenses further reported, recommending that W. E. Dawson, John Gibbs, Marshall Enoch, HATTIE ENOCH, G. H. Rogers, J. S. Thorp, George Kennedy, Clarence Santee, N. W. Vincent, and R. F. Barton RECEIVE LICENSES, which recommendation was adopted." [Kansas Conf. Proceedings, May, 1879] In 1893, Mrs White spoke approvingly of the ministerial license held by Dr Margaret Caro of New Zealand, observing that "she has a ministerial license and bears many burdens of their church at Napier. She speaks to the people, is intelligent and every way capable." [Ellen White, Mss 22, 1893.]

CONTINUING TO UPGRADE THE MINISTRY--WOMEN CONTINUE TO BE LICENSED AS MINISTERS [1878 GC session]: "RESOLVED, That those who apply for a license to preach the third angel's message, should, before they receive a license, be examined by a competent committee in regard to their doctrinal and educational qualifications.

Also "RESOLVED, That we have a committee of three to suggest a course of study for all our ministers, that committee to report at some future meeting of this session." [Oct. 11, 1878]

MRS WHITE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN EXAMINATION OF THOSE RECEIVING MINISTERIAL LICENSE: "I was unable to sit up yesterday, for with much writing, reining myself up to meet different ones who put in requests for license, speaking in public, and showing the unfitness of different ones to attempt to teach others the truth...."--To Edson and Emma, written from Salem, Oregon, June 14, 1880. W32a-1880.

ELLEN WHITE AND POSSIBILITY OF WOMEN ACTING AS ELDERS, 1879: "It is not always men who are best adapted to the successful management of a church. If faithful women have more deep piety and true devotion than men, they could indeed by their prayers and their labors do more than men who are unconsecrated in heart and in life."--Letter 33, 1879, p. 2. [NOTE: When Ellen White wrote the previous statement, the SDA church maintained no stationary pastorate. In today's setting, the "manager" of the local church would clearly be the pastor.]

IMPORTANCE OF MINISTERIAL LICENSE TO PREACH [Actions of Michigan Conference, Oct 2, 1881, RH, Oct 11, 1881]: "WHEREAS, Experience has taught us the necessity of giving credentials and licenses to such persons as the Conference may deem worthy to act in the capacity of preachers among us; and--

"WHEREAS, We learn to our great regret that some of our churches have encouraged individuals to preach for them who, either because of unsoundness in matters of doctrine or on account of some other disqualification, have not been licensed,

or have had licenses or credentials withheld from them; therefore--

"RESOLVED, That we express it as the sense of this Conference that it is the duty of all the churches belonging thereto to respect its action in this matter by refusing to encourage individuals to preach to them who have not been licensed, or who have had their licenses or credentials withheld from them [except by the full approval of the Conference Committee]. Passed as amended."

ORDINATION QUESTION 107 YEARS AGO--1881 GC RESOLUTION: "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.

"This was discussed by J O Corliss, A C Bourdeau, E R Jones, D H Lamson, W H Littlejohn, A S Hutchins, D M Canright, and J N Loughborough, and referred to the General Conference Committee."

LICENSED MINISTERS [INCLUDING WOMEN] WERE CONSIDERED AS PART OF THE OFFICIAL MINISTRY: ["Report of Committee on Course of Reading for Ministers," RH, Dec 20, 1881]: "We, your committee, respectfully submit the following report:--

"We recommend that ALL OUR MINISTERS, BOTH ORDAINED AND LICENTIATES, be requested to pursue the appended course of reading.

"We further recommend that the committee on credentials and licenses in each Conference examine the candidates yearly to see whether they have pursued the course of reading recommended." [6-year course outlined]

ILLUSTRATING THE NEED FOR PASTORING IN THE 19TH CENTURY SDA CHURCH--LOSS OF THE YOUTH [C H Bliss, "Illinois," RH, Dec 6, 1881]: "Labor among the Churches.--Since my last report, I have visited the churches at Lovington, Sadorus, Oakland, Martinsville, and Greenup. The future prospect of some of these churches seems encouraging, while others are in a very discouraging condition. Quite a number of young people have formerly been connected with them, who have within the last few years apostatized; their names have been dropped from our church rolls, and they have gone back to the world. Our older members are dying off. It is true that considering our churches as a whole, our additions exceed our losses; but this should be so in every church.

"One church in this section has lost seven or eight young members within the last three or four years, and these were children of Sabbath-keepers....If Sabbath-keeping parents desire their children to remain true to our faith, let them, instead of moving away from our churches and from communities where their

children have Sabbath-keepers as associates, simply because their prospects for accumulating property are better in these localities, seek the company of Sabbath-keepers, and the benefits of church relation, even though it cause the loss of earthly riches. When Sabbath-keepers who are parents consider the salvation of their children of greater value than earthly gain, we shall have less apostasy among this class.

"IT SEEMS TO ME THE TIME HAS COME WHEN SABBATH-KEEPERS MUST PRESS TOGETHER, BUILD CHURCHES AND ESTABLISH REGULAR MEETINGS, AND RECEIVE REGULAR VISITS FROM A MINISTER. WHEN THIS IS DONE, WE SHALL SEE LESS APOSTASY AMONG THE YOUNG AND ALSO AMONG THE OLD."

A MINISTER EVALUATES THE NATURE OF MINISTRY-- NEEDS FOR CHURCH-MEMBERS CHILDREN AND THE PASTORAL THRUST OF 1882 [J D Pegg, "Help Our Churches," RH, Jan 24, 1882]: "I was very much interested in the articles by Eld. Canright in regard to help for our churches, and have been wishing we in Iowa could make such arrangements as he suggests, and such as have been made in the Michigan Conference....[Michigan as leading conference in the new pastoral ministry and also leader in paving the way for women in ministry to help deal with the changing focus upon pastoral ministry]

"I have personal knowledge of the fact, also, that among the children of our brethren there are some who are longing to give themselves to Christ. They go to Sabbath-school, and attend meetings regularly, but no special effort is made to reach them. Timidity keeps them from making their condition known, and thus precious souls are hungering for the Bread of life, and remain unsatisfied, while the same churches are paying liberally of their means to send the ministers into new fields, to raise up new companies to have the same experience repeated. NOW, BRETHREN, WILL IT PAY TO SEND THE MINISTERS INTO NEW FIELDS, AND LET YOUR OWN CHILDREN AND THOSE WHO ARE CONVINCED OF THE TRUTH, GO HUNGRY, GET CARELESS, AND POSSIBLY LOSE ETERNAL LIFE, WHILE THE MEANS GOD HAS GIVEN YOU IS LAVISHED UPON THOSE WHO HAVE NO INTEREST UNTIL THEY COME TO A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, AND THEN LEAVE THEM IN A SIMILAR WAY?

"Many of our brethren who have been long in the way are lukewarm or cold, and do not realize their true condition. They feel the need of something, but they have been left so long to provide for themselves that they really do not have that acute 'hungering and thirsting for righteousness' which is characteristic of one who drinks deep of the outpouring of the Spirit on revival occasions.

"And lately, OUR MINISTERS NEED REVIVING. Greatly is this need felt by some. IF ALL THE TIME IS SPENT IN NEW FIELDS, PREACHING THEORETICAL DISCOURSES AND MEETING OPPOSITION, THE TENDER SENSIBILITIES OF THE SOUL BECOME BENUMBED, and unless the

minister can occasionally drop out of the argumentative mood, and meet with those who are in sympathy with him in his work, and drink in some of the tenderness of a revival spirit, his work will drag, and those who embrace the truth under his preaching will have his peculiar argumentative spirit stamped upon them. NOW, WOULD IT NOT BE A GOOD PLAN TO SPEND A PART OF THE PRESENT WINTER IN HOLDING REVIVAL MEETINGS AMONG OUR CHURCHES? Not a two-days' meeting, but a long one. Labor to see all the children converted and all backsliders reclaimed, and make a special effort to bring our spiritual being into harmony with God and his plans and laws, so that he can pour out his Spirit upon our famishing churches, not leaving until souls are begotten again unto a lively hope. REGULAR PREACHING MIGHT THEN BE ESTABLISHED, FOR A TIME AT LEAST.

"I have thought sometimes, as I have looked back over my own labor, that it is very poor economy to preach for six or eight weeks, expending time and money to get a company to embrace the truth, and then leave them only to visit them at long intervals and find them starving and dwarfed from neglect; and YET THIS IS THE WAY WE ARE DOING. Can we not in some way remedy this defect, and make a united, determined effort in Iowa, at least, to rescue our brethren from the lethargy that is enshrouding them?"

FORMATION OF MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN--LICENSED WOMEN MINISTERS WERE NOT ONLY MEMBERS, BUT WERE SPEAKERS AT MEETINGS OF THIS INITIAL ASSOCIATION [Mich Conf Com, "Program of Exercises at the S D Adventist Ministerial Association of Michigan," RH, Feb 14, 1882]: "Tuesday...Discourse by Mrs. E. B. Lane."

DILEMMA OF 19TH CENTURY SDA CHURCH SUCCINCTLY STATED [S N Haskell, "Ministers and Missionary Workers," RH, Feb 21, 1882]: "Our mission is to every nation, tongue, and people, and while our work lies largely in new fields, our churches, many of them young and inexperienced, need watch care and labor....It is impossible for our limited number of ministers to visit our churches frequently, so as to keep them in a flourishing condition, and at the same time enter new fields and give protracted courses of lectures to any great extent."

ELLEN WHITE AND THE CALL FOR WOMEN TO DO PASTORAL WORK: ["Our Publications," RH, April 4, 1882]: "If there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting before the public our publications, which will lead men to search the Scriptures. Missionary work--introducing our publications into families, conversing, and praying with and for them--is a good work, AND ONE WHICH WILL EDUCATE MEN AND WOMEN TO DO PASTORAL LABOR." [Taken from Testimony No. 29]

MICHIGAN MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION [Unsigned, "The Michigan Ministerial Association," RH, April 4, 1882]: "The first meeting of this Association was held, according to appointment, at Otsego, March 21-28....[2 of original 24 members were women]

Every one seemed to feel entirely free in the expression of his opinions; and it was shown that a diversity of views on some points needs not disturb harmony of feeling, and that persons may occasionally favor different lines of policy without becoming alienated in heart or discourteous in manner...."There were upward of twenty ministers and licentiates present. The general attendance from the Otsego church and other surrounding churches was such as to give a full house at each meeting....The next annual meeting of this Association is appointed to be held in Flint, the last week in March, 1883."

CONSTITUTION OF FIRST MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION--WOMEN WHO WERE LICENSED WERE CLEARLY PART OF THE OFFICIAL MINISTRY [J O Corliss, pres., and D H Lamson, secy, "SDA Ministerial Association of Michigan," RH, Apr 11, 1882]: "Article II.--Object. The object of this Association shall be the mutual instruction and improvement of its members in all that pertains to the work of the gospel minister....

"Article V.--Membership. Any ordained or licensed minister of the SDA Michigan Conference may become a member of the Association on payment of twenty-five cents." [Mrs. J. A. Owen and Mrs. E. B. Lane were among the initial 24 members of this association]

ELLEN WHITE ON GOD'S VIEW OF MINISTRY AND WHY THERE COULD BE NO SUBORDINATION OF WOMEN: "The Lord has given Christ to the world for ministry. Merely to preach the Word is not ministry. The Lord desires His ministering servants to occupy a place worthy of the highest consideration. In the mind of God, the ministry of men and women existed before the world was created. [That observation destroys any concept of subordination based upon the entrance of sin.] He determined that His ministers should have a perfect exemplification of Himself and His purposes. No human career could do this work; so God gave Christ in humanity to work out His ideal of what humanity may become through entire obedience to His will and way. God's character was revealed in the life of His Son. Christ not only held a theory of genuine ministry, but in His humanity He wrought out an illustration of the ministry that God approves. Perfection has marked out every feature of true ministry. Christ, the Son of the living God, did not live unto Himself, but unto God." [Ellen White, Diary entry March 12, 1891, Ms 23-1891, emphasis supplied.]

ELLEN WHITE AND THE DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN HELP WORK [Setting for her calling for women to be ordained]: EGW, "How the Truth Should Be Presented," Home Missionary, Dec, 1892--"The Lord is in need of workers who will push the triumphs of the cross of Christ. Jesus calls for every sincere, loyal disciple to engage faithfully in his service. In every department of the cause of God, there is need of men and women who have sympathy for the woes of humanity; but such sympathy is rare.

"We should study, plan, and pray to God for wisdom and grace that we might save the souls in the highways and broadways of life....The end is near! Everything in our outward world shows that an important crisis is about to open upon us. Are we ready for it?....We need faith--more faith; we must believe in Jesus as our personal Saviour. Who among us believe that men can be saved without having practical, working faith in Christ? If we are working--mind, heart, and soul--as in the light of the Judgment day, we are laborers together with God. Divine and human efforts must be combined....There should be more personal labor....In presenting the truth to others, we should follow the example of Christ. He did not present a great mass of truth, to be accepted all at once. He led the inquiring mind from truth to truth....

"CHRIST DREW THE HEARTS OF HIS HEARERS TO HIMSELF BY THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS LOVE, AND THEN, LITTLE BY LITTLE, AS THEY WERE ABLE TO BEAR IT, HE UNFOLDED TO THEM THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE KINGDOM. WE ALSO MUST LEARN TO ADAPT OUR LABORS TO THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE,--TO MEET MEN WHERE THEY ARE. WHILE THE CLAIMS OF THE LAW OF GOD ARE TO BE PRESENTED TO THE WORLD, WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THAT LOVE--THE LOVE OF CHRIST--IS THE ONLY POWER THAT CAN SOFTEN THE HEART, AND LEAD TO OBEDIENCE. ALL THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE SCRIPTURES CENTER IN CHRIST; AND RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD, ALL LEAD TO HIM. LET CHRIST BE PRESENTED AS THE ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, OF THE GREAT PLAN OF REDEMPTION."

ELLEN WHITE INITIATES CONCEPT OF ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN SDA CHURCH--CONTEXT TO ELLEN WHITE'S LANDMARK STATEMENT ON ORDINATION IN 1895: Conditions in Australia provided the backdrop for the development of an SDA ministry of compassion. Mrs White exclaimed, "The poor are everywhere. The banks have ruined the country." She noticed that financial distress was everywhere and as she perceived the desperate personal needs she received divine insight: "Yesterday it all opened before me that in this very line of hospitality, I have been repeatedly shown that we can unite the people with us, and can have twofold influence over them. This was unfolded before me in the first experience in this work, many years back, and we have ever linked our interest with humanity." [Ellen White to W C White, Aug 6, 1894, W135-1894.]

Mrs White assigned to women a major role in the kind of ministry she proposed for Australia. She regretted that Sister Walker had been taken from the Kellyville-Prospect-Parramatta area for that left the area without a woman worker. "Why did they let her go?" asked Mrs White for she insisted "the work done and to be done in families is increasing, and calls, urgent calls, are made for Bible readings and this is doing a precious work." [Ellen White to W C White, Feb 19, 1895, W142-1895.] Notice Mrs White's concept of ministry and her perception that women as well as men should be involved in this kind of pastoral labor: "I am now paying the expenses of two workers in Ashfield and Petersham. They are capable men, but the Conference had not

money to pay them, and rather than go in debt deeply, they thought of dispensing with their labor....

"The two men, Bro Collins and Bro Pallant, who are paid from my purse, have been doing visiting, getting access to families, interesting them by personal labor, and giving them Bible readings. Both are capable men, and will soon be ordained to the ministry. As much depends upon the work of visiting, talking and praying with the people, and opening the way of truth to them, as in giving discourses, and I could not let them go out of the work....

"There are women of excellent ability, who, I think, should be connected with the work...[One] sister, Edwards by name, is a prepossessing woman of excellent qualifications; and if I could make my purse stretch a little further, I would say, 'Sister Edwards, take right hold, and visit the families you know are interested in the truth, and talk with them.' We have no women workers here now, since we let Sister Walker go up to Queensland at the earnest call of Bro Starr for women workers in the homes of those who are interested hearers of the truth." [Ellen White to Brother Harper, March 7, 1895, H31b-1895.]

Observe that these men, who were soon to be ordained, were actually being dispensed with by the conference because there was insufficient funding for them. Notice also that Ellen White personally paid them, perhaps from her tithe funds, to do work along pastoral lines similar to the kind of labor she would also pay women to do. She felt it her duty "to create a fund from my tithe money, to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls." [Ellen White to Brethren Irwin, Evans, Smith and Jones, April 21, 1898, I191a-1898.] Mrs White saw the kind of ministry the church needed and was restricted neither by formalized definitions nor gender.

Notice also that the previously quoted document reveals that "Sister Walker" was clearly called at the conference level from one area to another to perform pastoral-evangelistic labor.

Ellen White's perspective of a "ministry of compassion" resolved the pastoral-evangelistic dilemma of the 19th century and brought to the church a methodology for dealing with 20th century urban realities. Beginning in June of 1895, Ellen White wrote a series of articles that focused upon methodologies designed to evangelize the cities. One of the proposals made by Ellen White in her Review articles was that women involved in this evangelistic-pastoral methodology "should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands." When Ellen White's wording is compared to what she would later write concerning women and tithe, true gospel ministry, etc, it seems to indicate that she considered women eligible for ordination to the most

truly pastoral and relevant ministry then within the church. No matter how one interprets her Review statement, she clearly is proclaiming that it was now possible for SDA women to be ordained "with perfect propriety." All evidence points to the fact that prior to this time, the church considered it improper to ordain women to any church role and it apparently was not done.

On June 11, 1895, Mrs White made it apparent that her focus was upon work "in our large cities." She called for "labor from house to house, not neglecting the poor." Since Christ preached the gospel to the poor, "we are to go and do likewise." She considered that the cities "are not worked as they should be" and called for "earnest work, by hard, painful experience" to "reach the men and the women of our cities." [Ellen White, RH, June 11, 1895.]

On July 9, Mrs White proposed a general application within the church of "Christ's methods" of ministry. The nature of the ministry Mrs White was proposing was clearly one already in operation in Australia and one that women were participating in at various levels. Margaret Caro, who held the ministerial license, operated a home for wayward girls, actively preached in her local church and according to Ellen White was "in every way capable." [Ellen White, Mss 22, 1893.] Some women, as Dr Abbie Winegar in the United States, went from church to church instructing the local churches on the nature of the Christian Help ministry. Anna Ingels, who administered the Australian Tract Society, encouraged the Christian Help Work in the Australian Bible Echo and traveled extensively in Australia to encourage that ministry.

Here, indeed, is a sample of the pastoring that Ellen White was calling for. Here was the kind of work that she considered it entirely appropriate for women to be ordained to for it was indeed gospel work. Notice the elements within Ellen White's statement concerning ordination of women:

"Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church. We need to branch out more in our methods of labor. Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work." [Ellen White, RH, July 9, 1895.]

Mrs White is speaking of a kind of ministry that women would be "appointed" to, provided they were able to "consecrate" some

of their time to it. The manner in which ministry was defined in the 19th century was somewhat dependent upon the financial situation. During the severely depressed economic situation in the 1890s, especially in Australia, many ministers were asked to combine their ministerial work with other kinds of work so as to relieve the denominational treasury. Many ministers would thus work as ministers during some of their time and do self-supporting work for another part. All sorts of less than ideal situations occurred because of the lack of finances. Some women who maintained a ministry that visited the sick or who worked for the youth or who cared for the poor received conference tithe funds for so doing. Further Mrs White expressed her willingness to support some from her own personal tithe funds. She also did provide funds for some men who were doing a similar work.

Mrs White believed that those who felt called to this kind of ministry "should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands." Even if the position is taken that Mrs White was here referring to volunteer labor from the local church, there still remains the point that such local lay workers needed training and that was supplied from the conference level and those who did the training from the conference level should certainly be ordained. In this writer's opinion, Mrs White was saying to the church that it had for too long considered it inappropriate to ordain women to any kind of role.

Once it was recognized that a woman could be ordained to something, then the ordination question was resolved, because women were already licensed as ministers and defined by Mrs White to be appropriately involved in the most relevant ministries then embraced by the church. They were doing the vitally necessary pastoral labor, they were working along Christ's lines of ministry, they were preaching the spoken word, they were ministering in the fullest sense as defined by Mrs White. Indeed, observed Mrs White: "We need to branch out more in our methods of labor" and we should neither "bind" nor "discourage" those who embraced this kind of ministry either as ordained lay workers (those who labored "privately") or as ordained Conference employees (those who labored "publicly"). Notice again her full statement: "Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work." The nature of the Christian Help Work ministry clearly had both lay and official aspects and women clearly were eligible for ordination to it.

Prior to this Ellen White statement, evidence indicates that no woman had been considered eligible for ordination in the SDA church. Indeed, it appears that, while at least three women were ordained in the aftermath of Ellen White's 1895 statement, that the statement was lost for much of denominational history and resurfaced from time to time in our past. The following appears in the latest edition of the Church Manual and illustrates the

problem: "THE DEACONESS...Women served in the early church as deaconesses. There is no record, however, that these women were ordained; hence the practice of ordaining deaconesses is not followed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 1986 edition.]

WHY THE CHURCH MUST ORDAIN ITS WOMEN [To harmonize with what God has identified with]: "Injustice has been done to women who labor just as devotedly as their husbands, and who are recognized by God as being as necessary to the work of ministry as their husbands. The method of paying men-laborers and not their wives, is a plan not after the Lord's order....This arrangement...is liable to discourage our sisters from qualifying themselves for the work they should engage in [i.e., ministry]....This question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it. You are to do your duty to the women who labor in the gospel. [Ellen White, "The Laborer Is Worthy of His Hire," Mss 43a-1898, emphasis supplied.]

WORK OF MINISTERING TO BE OPEN TO WOMEN: "God wants workers who can carry the truth to all classes, high and low, rich and poor. In this work women may act an important part. God grant that those who read these words may put forth earnest efforts to present an open door for consecrated women to enter the field." Mss 43a, 1897. [Mrs White is here calling for official church workers, who would be paid from tithe funds. This was the fullest definition of ministry within the 19th century SDA setting.]

ELLEN WHITE AND THE TEACHING PHASE OF PASTORAL MINISTRY: "You are to do your duty to the WOMEN WHO LABOR IN THE GOSPEL, WHOSE WORK TESTIFIES THAT THEY ARE ESSENTIAL TO CARRY THE TRUTH INTO FAMILIES. THEIR WORK IS JUST THE WORK THAT MUST BE DONE. In many respects a woman can impart knowledge to her sisters that a man cannot. The cause would suffer great loss without this kind of labor. AGAIN AND AGAIN THE LORD HAS SHOWN ME THAT WOMEN TEACHERS ARE JUST AS GREATLY NEEDED TO DO THE WORK TO WHICH HE HAS APPOINTED THEM AS ARE MEN."--[Ellen White, "The Laborer Is Worthy of His Hire," Mss 43a-1898.]

"THERE ARE WOMEN WHO SHOULD LABOR IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY": "There are women who should labor in the gospel ministry. In many respects they would do more good than the ministers who neglect to visit the flock of God. Husband and wife may unite in this work, and when it is possible, they should. THE WAY IS OPEN FOR CONSECRATED WOMEN." [Mss. 43a, 1898, Evangelism 472]

ELLEN WHITE AND WHY WOMEN ARE INHERENTLY VITAL TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY: [1] "It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence." [Ellen White, "The Needs of the Cause in Australasia: An Appeal," June 11, 1903.]

[2] "The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within." [Ellen White, "He That Loveth Not His Brother Abideth in Death," Aug 2, 1899.]

THE DILEMMA OF SDA WOMEN AS OUTLINED BY A WOMAN WORKER: "Poor Eve! No wonder she [has such a poor reputation], being held responsible for all of man's sins as well as for all of her own." [Jennie Thayer diary entry, Jan 4, 1899]

ELLEN WHITE CONSIDERS WOMEN AS MINISTERS IN THE FULLEST SENSE: "All who wish an opportunity for true ministry, and who will give themselves unreservedly to God, will find in the canvassing work opportunities to speak upon many things pertaining to the future immortal life. The experience thus gained will be of the greatest value to THOSE WHO ARE FITTING THEMSELVES FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY. It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, TO BECOME PASTORS TO THE FLOCK OF GOD."--RH, January 15, 1901. [Ellen White clearly recognized that women had the capacity for being "pastors."]

ELLEN WHITE AND BASIS FOR A SCRIPTURAL RATIONALE FOR ORDAINING WOMEN--MRS WHITE DEFINES TRUE MINISTRY FROM PASSAGES IN ISAIAH 58 AND 61: "If men and women would act as the Lord's helping hand, doing deeds of love and kindness, uplifting the oppressed, rescuing those ready to perish, the glory of the Lord would be their rearguard...Of those who act as his helping hand the Lord says, 'Ye shall be named priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God.'" [Ellen White, Jan 17, 1901, B7-1901. Ellen White has applied to women of her time, those OT passages referring to "priests and ministers," when no women served in the priesthood, thus exhibiting her role in pointing out the principles of Scripture.]

ELLEN WHITE AND THE PURPOSE OF ORDINATION: [Why the Christian church ordained Paul and Barnabas]--"In order that their work should be above challenge, [God] instructed the church by revelation to set them apart publicly to the work of the ministry. Their ordination was a public recognition of their divine appointment to bear to the Gentiles the glad tidings of the gospel." [Ellen White, Acts of the Apostles, p 161.

#### CASE STUDY: ELLEN S. LANE

Married 1865, husband begins ministry 1868.

Nature of ministry, 19th century: "While meeting the most determined opposition to the truth, news came that E B Lane's only child was dying. He was obliged to stand against the tide, preached a sermon in defense of his faith, and started on horseback on a journey of 16 miles, to arrive five minutes

after his lovely babe had breathed its last. On another occasion, when his wife was seriously ill with typhoid fever, he did not leave the work of preaching, although he had the entire care of her through her protracted sickness."

Illustrates several things: seriousness with which the message was taken in the 19th century--Mother bearing the death of her child alone--

Opportunities for a woman in 19th century Adventism: RH, Feb. 6, 1872, report by E. B. Lane--"Sabbath, Jan. 27, was another good day for the church at Potterville. The brethren came in from the surrounding country, who, with others from this vicinity, made a large congregation. Mrs. Lane gave an interesting discourse in the forenoon on the subject of 'Unquestioned Obedience,' in the afternoon, conference meeting."

c. 1873, E. B. Lane began a series of meetings in Bowling Green, Ohio, when he contracted diphtheria and she began to assist him by opening the meetings, and speaking when he was not able. Such a course was not only appropriate, but welcomed within the evangelistically-minded denomination. So many areas had never heard the truth.

Beginning the next year, the reports are no longer signed by just E. B. Lane, but are jointly signed E. B. and E. S. Lane.

In 1874, the Ohio Conference, at its annual meeting, passed the following: "RESOLVED, That we express our gratitude to God for the success attending the labors of Eld. E. B. Lane and wife in our Conference, and that we cordially invite them to remain, and continue to labor among us."

By 1875, Mrs. Lane was clearly recognized as a laborer in her own right. Notice this report signed by E. B. Lane, and J. O. Corliss, who, with their wives, were conducting meetings in Pine Run, Michigan: "We have now been at this place 16 days, and have given 25 discourses. Some have already decided to keep the Sabbath, while many are deeply interested. We are occupying a house 40x60 feet, which is well filled at each meeting, and on the occasion of Mrs. Lane's first discourse many went away unable to get in."

Truly looked upon as husband-wife ministry: [RH notice]: "Bro. and sister E. B. Lane have gone to New England, to labor with the tent in New Hampshire and Massachusetts the present summer."

E. B. Lane report from Milford, NH, RH, Sept. 23, 1875: "We pitched one of the New England tents at this place....Some half dozen have taken their stand with us. Mrs. Lane has been laboring with them since camp-meeting, endeavoring to get them established and in working order....The editor of the Milford Enterprise

spared no pains to help by publishing favorable reports of the meetings and giving items of our faith and history from week to week. This is also true of the Amherst Farmer's Cabinet.

"Mrs. Lane gave a health and temperance discourse in the tent, and by special request of over fifty of the leading citizens repeated it in the Town Hall, which will seat over one thousand, and which was well filled."

With her husband and J. O. Corliss and his wife, the quartet opened the work in Virginia, where there was not one SDA known in 1876

Mrs. Lane's role: [From reports of August and Sept., 1876]  
 "From a thriving farming region, about 13 miles northwest of New Market, we received an invitation to come and hold a grove meeting....Our first discourse was on the soon return of our dear Lord, the people listening with marked attention. The next morning, which was Sunday, at an early hour about one hundred assembled for a prayer and conference meeting. This was followed by a discourse from Mrs. Lane, before several hundred people."

"Our average congregations are about sixty. There is great excitement over the Sabbath question. Mrs. Lane is holding prayer-meetings from house to house, to get the young and others into the work of praying and speaking in meeting. She has had excellent success."

Holding of separate meetings: "During the last week we have held 10 meetings in the tent, and Mrs. Lane has held three at Soliloquy."

"On Sunday, Mrs. Lane addressed an assembly numbering 650. This we regard a large congregation for a country place; for our tent is pitched on a farm. Some 20 have decided to keep the Sabbath, and we expect others."

"Sunday we had the hardest rain of the season, yet about 500 were gathered to hear Mrs. Lane on the subject of health reform and temperance."

"On Sunday, Eld. S. Henkel, of New Market, preached on the Sabbath question. Eld. Corliss reviewed him. Mrs. Lane by urgent request, spoke in a United Brethren church, at Grove Hill; the house was crowded, and only about half were able to get in....The past week we have given 17 discourses, visited 20 or more families, and held two Sabbath meetings at different places with good attendance. [Not without cost] Our hearts have been made sad; for we have been called to part with one of the little ones of our number, Lou Ellen, only child of Eld. Corliss, aged nearly 20 months. She was buried last Friday, at New Market. She died of whooping cough. Away from home and among strangers, it is hard to leave the little ones strewn along the way."

"On Sunday, the congregation was estimated at 800. The country is stirred for miles around. We have never had so many pressing calls for labor as now."

May 23, 1878: "In harmony with the advice of the General Conference, we have returned to Michigan, and this State will, for the present, be our field of labor."

Oct. 2, 1878, EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL SESSION OF MICHIGAN CONFERENCE OF SDAs: The Committee on Credentials and Licenses submitted the following report: For ministerial license...MRS. E. S. LANE.

From husband-wife teams to separate ministries: E S Lane reports, July, 1881--"Casenovia--Sabbath, the 23d, held a meeting here. The blessing of God was with us in rich measure. Two strangers were present, and by their testimony in the social meeting we learned that they were Sabbath-keepers. These two ladies, past sixty years of age, had walked five miles and a half to attend meeting....I hold six meetings each week. They are usually well attended. Last Sunday evening, spoke on the Sabbath question to a large and attentive audience, many being obliged to stand outside at the door and windows."

Same issue of Review: Report of meetings of her husband from Camden, Michigan.

E. B. Lane died Aug. 6, 1881, while he was conducting meetings in Camden, Michigan. His wife was conducting a separate series of meetings in another place, where she was informed of her husband's death.

It is interesting that both Mrs. White and Mrs. Lane were widowed on the same day, and that both continued on in their full-fledged ministerial work long after the deaths of their husbands. On August 20, 1881, Mrs. White spoke to the Battle Creek church for 50 minutes "with great clearness of mind and strength of voice. After this she remained to the social meeting which followed, of over thirty minutes' duration." Mrs. White "addressed a few appropriate and impressive words of consolation to Sister E. B. Lane, who was present." Husband-wife ministries were, in a very real sense, allowed to fulfill this Ellen White statement:

"I was instructed that there are matters that need to be considered. Injustice has been done to women who labor just as devotedly as their husbands, AND WHO ARE RECOGNIZED BY GOD AS BEING AS NECESSARY TO THE WORK OF MINISTRY AS THEIR HUSBANDS. [Mss. 43a, 1898.]

Michigan Conference meeting, Sept. 28, 1881--Voted "ministerial license" or the "license to preach" to Mrs. E. S.

Lane. Hers was now unquestionably a separate ministry.

Notice also that the question of licensing was taken seriously. Resolution passed at the 1881 Michigan Conference Session: "WHEREAS, Experience has taught us the necessity of giving credentials and licenses to such persons as the Conference may deem worthy to act in the capacity of preachers among us; and--

"WHEREAS, We learn to our great regret that some of our churches have encouraged individuals to preach for them who, either because of unsoundness in matters of doctrine or on account of some other disqualification, have not been licensed, or have had licenses or credentials withheld from them; therefore--

"RESOLVED, That we express it as this sense of this Conference that it is the duty of all the churches belonging thereto to respect its action in this matter by refusing to encourage individuals to preach to them who have not been licensed, or who have had their licenses or credentials withheld from them [except by the full approval of the Conference Committee]."

A few days after the Michigan Conference session, the General Conference of 1881 was held on the same campground. Among the resolutions adopted by that session was the following: "RESOLVED, That those who apply for a license to preach the third angel's message, should, before they receive a license, be examined by a competent committee in regard to their doctrinal and educational qualifications."

The very fact that the question of ordination was discussed in 1881 indicated that licensing, which began in the 1870s, carried with it the ultimate question of ordination. Perhaps, also because of that reason, the "license to preach" or "ministerial license" was taken very seriously.

Ellen White actively involved herself in the examinations that occurred prior to the issuing of licenses and she attended many of the conference proceedings where ministerial licenses were issued to women. She even spoke on the importance of the ministerial license.

Notice these two other resolutions presented to the 1881 GC session: "RESOLVED, That all candidates for license and ordination should be examined with reference to their intellectual and spiritual fitness for the successful discharge of the duties which will devolve upon them as licentiates and ordained ministers.

"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."

The first resolution was adopted, but there was obvious division of opinion upon the second and it was referred to the General Conference Committee where it apparently died. Ellen White was not present at the 1881 session, nor did she apparently comment upon it. If one takes the position that Ellen White's silence indicates disapproval of ordination or that the issue, if important, would have been resolved by her through a vision, then the question is raised as to why Ellen White approved the licensing of women. Such licensing obviously set women upon the path to ordination. The GC discussion of ordination of women soon after their licensing clearly evidences that.

Mrs. Lane resumed her ministry after the death of her husband and continued to be voted the ministerial license for the next 7 years.

She worked as a full-fledged denominational minister, except for organizing churches or baptizing. She was a member of the ministerial association, attended ministers Bible Schools, led out in quarterly meetings, preached evangelistic sermons on all phases of denominational teaching, lectured to large SDA and non-SDA audiences on health and temperance matters, conducted revival meetings, made pastoral visits to languishing churches, maintained excellent contacts (through her interest in health matters) with many non-SDA churches.

#### CASE STUDY: LULU WIGHTMAN

Probably very few of the members of a number of churches in New York State realize that their church was initially established or re-established by a woman. But that is true of the churches in Hornellsville, Gas Springs, Wallace, Silver Creek, Geneva, Angola, Gorham, Fredonia, Avoca, Rushville, Canandaigua, and Penn Yan. Mrs. Lulu Wightman, the "most successful minister in New York State between 1896 and 1905" established the first churches in each of these places.

Here is an evaluation by one of Lulu's fellow ministers after her first year in ministry [S. M. Cobb, writing to New York Conference president]: "I say as I have said all the time in reference to Sr. Lulu Wightman, that a good lady worker will accomplish as much good as the best men we have got, and I am more and more convinced that it is so. Look at Sr. Lulu W.'s work. She has accomplished more the last two years than any minister in this state, and yet the Conf. has held her off arms length, and refused to recognize her as a suitable person to present the truth, when in fact she was out of sight of the very ones that opposed her, in point of ability (you know who I mean)....I am also in favor of giving license to Sr. Lulu Wightman to preach, and believe that there is no reason why she

should not receive it, and if Bro. W. is a man of ability and WORKS WITH HIS WIFE and promises to make a successful laborer, I am in favor of giving him license also." [Cobb later became president of the West Virginia, New South Wales and New Zealand conferences.]

In the Oct., 1897, annual meeting of the New York Conference, Lulu Wightman received her ministerial license and, from time to time, her husband received some pay from the conference in recognition of his help to her. Mrs. Wightman was licensed for six years before her husband received his license. He was ordained two years after receiving his license. She never was.

Apparently the result of licensing John Wightman caused a discussion concerning the question of salary for the now-formed wife-husband team. When the conference president suggested that Mrs. Wightman "voluntarily lower her salary" from \$9 to \$7 per week to conform to the usual licentiate salary of \$7, the husband felt grieved. Only because the husband wrote a private letter to the president of the New York Conference in 1904 do we learn that the question of the ordination of Mrs. Wightman came up at the 1901 annual meeting of the New York Conference. John Wightman observed:

"Mrs. Wightman's personal work was considered by three or four former [auditing] committees as being that of an ordained minister unquestionably; and yet, at Oswego [location of the 1901 New York Conference meeting], they felt (Brethren Daniells and Thompson, to which opinion Elder Underwood and others strongly demurred) that a woman could not properly be ordained--just now at least--and so they fixed her compensation as near the 'ordained' rate as possible. As her capability was recognized and general fitness known to all, and work continued, the \$9 is still as fitting under the circumstances as before."

In effect, according to Wightman, the General Conference president and the local conference president opposed the ordination of Mrs. Wightman in 1901. The former "union" president "and others" "strongly" disagreed with the premise that the time, 1901, was inopportune for ordaining a woman.

1904 GC Statistical analysis--Clearly shows Mrs. Wightman as the most effective minister in New York State if judged solely by the number of accessions.

The Wightman's ministry continued and embraced a variety of roles. Mrs. Wightman attained state and national acclaim in religious liberty lectures before a number of state legislatures. Her husband proudly wrote of her in 1909:

"Yesterday a resolution was adopted in the House of Representatives inviting Mrs. Wightman to address the

representatives in the House of Representatives chamber on 'The Rise of Religious Liberty in the United States.' I believe this action upon the part of the Missouri legislature is unprecedented in the history of our people."

WOMEN AND MINISTRY IN THE 19th CENTURY: [1] were given instruction in Ministerial Reading Course to allow them to enter the field; [2] took ministerial courses at Battle Creek College; [3] examined as licentiates by committees; [4] stated to be ministers by Ellen White; [5] members of ministerial associations; [6] paid from tithe funds reserved for ministry; [7] attended Biblical Institutes; [8] given "licenses to preach" or "preachers licenses" [9] acted as evangelists; [10] acted as "pastors"

#### Women's Issue in Recent SDA History

MARY McREYNOLDS PROTESTS THE DEMISE OF SDA WOMEN'S MOVEMENT:  
 "This Woman's Movement--you know was born of God's Spirit--it was brought into being to do a work and it was not born to the life of a moth or a butterfly--to flit rapidly but briefly before the light and--die. In many of our hearts there has been burning the desire to see our Women so thoroughly organized that they will be a permanent, working force. Why not, we have the Missionary Volunteer for the youth, and the general organizations for all--the Sabbath school for the children. Why not a permanent 'Woman's Movement' that is a movement. And, Elder Daniells, why was that name ever changed to 'Committee.' A Committee is appointed, does its work, retires gracefully and is discontinued. This was a thing born of prayer; it was conceived in the souls of women who were--not appointed--but delegated by the Lord to do a work, it seems to me, that should never cease. It has taken a tremendous amount of work to organize these women over the United States and Canada. They are just now beginning to catch the real spirit of the thing." [Mary McReynolds to A G Daniells, Oct 22, 1916.]

IMPACT OF AND REGULAR REDISCOVERY OF ELLEN WHITE 1895 STATEMENT ON ORDINATION ISSUE: General Conference Officers' meeting, May 3, 1950--"ORDINATION OF WOMEN: In California some women have been ordained for Dorcas Society work. Agreed, To list this item on agenda for Home and Foreign Officers."

June 29, 1950, Home and Foreign Officers' meeting--"A V Olson explained how the item had come to be listed. 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 [GC] session that a small committee be appointed to study and report on this question."

ORDINATION ISSUE IN RECENT SDA HISTORY NOT A RESULT OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN U.S.: W P Bradley [GC Secretary] to H W

Lowe [Chairman of Research and Defense Literature Committee, forerunner of Biblical Research Office], Nov 27, 1968: "The question [of ordination of women in SDA church] arose out of an inquiry from Northern Europe as to the advisability of ordaining some of our lady evangelists in Finland. [Northern Europe] requested that we give them counsel on this."

MISS OPAL STONE REFLECTS ON WOMEN AND SDA HISTORY AS ISSUE EMERGES IN 1970s: "The idea is abroad that the [Biblical Research] committee believes that little feeling of inequity existed among women until quite recently. That it was possibly sparked by Women's Lib. If that is correct, the committee has been misinformed....In earlier years women held departmental secretary positions in local conferences. They spoke at the worship hour week after week as they visited churches. True, their reception varied. In four years as a local conference Sabbath school secretary I learned to expect anything, but for the most part I was accepted. I recall one church elder who declined to sit on the same platform, but at the close of the service somewhat gruffly said, 'Too bad you aren't a man, but come again anyway.'

"The sad part of the inequities is that many well-qualified women have left denominational employ because of it. And some of them kept on going all the way out of the church. Their loss? Yes, but a loss to the church, too.

"God used a woman to guide this denomination. Yet women have had a hard time in the church. It seems peculiar.

"I've been retired for some years. I have no bitterness; I was as fairly treated as the rest of the women. But I would like to see the present generation of women workers have a better change. Please don't believe that women were asleep all the past years and have suddenly awakened." [Opal Stone to Gordon Hyde, Jan 27, 1972. Miss Stone had served as Secretary of the Central California Sabbath School Dept from 1922 to 1926 and Asst Editor and proofreader of Pacific Union Recorder for 30 years. She died in 1973 at age 79 before her hopes were realized.]

ROBERT PIERSON REQUESTS ORDINATION STUDY: "What can we do to stimulate a little study in the area of theology as it relates to the women in our church I have in mind especially 1) in positions of leadership, 2) ordination, 3) in leadership of local churches. I notice that the Presbyterian Church has elected a young woman nineteen years of age as a 'church elder.' I believe this is an area that we cannot ignore and that we ought to be working out something rather definite in the not too distant future." [to Gordon Hyde, Feb 16, 1971]

GORDON HYDE AND IMPORTANCE OF ELLEN WHITE'S 1895 ORDINATION STATEMENT: "We have not yet dealt adequately with the E G White statement which appeared in the Review and Herald of July 9,

1895." [to R H Pierson, Feb 18, 1971]

ROBERT PIERSON AND "WORLD CHURCH" PREMISE: "I want us to be fair and just to the fine ladies of the church in every respect, but not to become embroiled in controversy with a few women's libbers! We must keep very much in mind that this is a world church, and any 'position papers' the church might come up with must not prejudice our position or dim our image in other lands where the position of women may not be the same as here in the United States." [to Gordon Hyde, Aug 29, 1972]

GORDON HYDE AND ROLE OF WOMEN--HOPES FOR 1975 GC SESSION:  
 "Perhaps we have not begun to tap the resources of the women of this denomination for the finishing of the work of the Lord....For those whose talents and experience qualify them, there would be a new sense of worth and dedication should the Church take the initiative in opening the doors. Likewise, others would be encouraged to qualify themselves.

"It appeals to me, Elder Pierson, that the Church should have been in the forefront in capitalizing on the potential of the women of the Church, instead of dragging its heels and reluctantly conforming with Government-imposed requirements affecting the role of women. It is not quite too late to grasp the opportunity (it should be done soon, and in time for the coming General Conference session) [i.e., 1975 GC] to bring a wave of loyalty, devotion, and dedication from the women of this Church such as we have not yet seen. I feel it and I believe it."  
 [to R H Pierson, Aug 23, 1972]

PURPOSE OF MOHAVEN MEETINGS: "It is the concern of the General Conference leadership that this Council shall explore adequately the theological and historical backgrounds and dimensions of this subject." [Gordon Hyde to Members of Council on Role of Women, July 26, 1973]

SOME QUESTIONS RAISED BY BIBLICAL RESEARCH OFFICE TO MOHAVEN DELEGATES:

Does the Bible advocate an ideal which is not always implemented within its own pages?

a. Would the level of implementation of the divorce laws in OT times serve as a norm for divorce in our time?

b. Would the level of implementation of the position of slaves in NT society serve as a norm for our time (the NT shows no urgency in the matter of emancipation of slaves)?

Would an accurate description of first century Christianity automatically be the authoritative standard for the church through the ages?

Does the treatment of women in the NT speak to the ideal position of women or to God's condescension and accommodation to mankind?

Is it God's plan to lead His people to an ever higher ideal?...

Does the subordinate role given to women in specific Biblical instances equal non-ordination of women?

The argument from the choice of males for apostleship.

a. Are either men or women being considered today to fill an apostolic office? Is there not a once-and-for-allness in that office? Thus are we not dealing with apostleship rather than with the ministry, and is the limitation today not just as much upon men as it is upon women?

b. By what principle of interpretation could the choice of men as apostles be made binding for all times and interpreted to mean men only in the ministry?

i. How can we know that the point of the choice of disciples was the non-ordination of women?

ii. Would it not be necessary to demonstrate that Christ was acting upon a principle valid for all time?

iii. Would it not also be necessary to demonstrate that the principle had application to the ministry?

iv. Is everything in the life of Christ binding in a normative way? For example, Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 10:6). Is His mission to Judah only, binding for all times? (In spite of Christ's limited mission it is interesting to note that His teachings point to the world-wide mission of the church.)

v. Does this not indicate that the record of a specific Biblical act or choice is not necessarily meant to be the norm for all time?...

Is Ellen G White's description of the possible function of women within the church in harmony with the function of an ordained individual?...

What are the implications of the role of Ellen G White and women in the Bible as prophets for the ordination of women? If God was willing to set apart a woman as His special representative in the 19th century, should the church be reluctant to set women apart by ordination for special service in God's cause in the 20th century? ["Some Considerations on Issues Related to the Ordination of Women," distributed by BRI to

delegates for Mohaven, July 26, 1973]

JAN PAULSON AND ORDINATION OF WOMEN: "The question of whether a woman should be ordained before she takes up her official task within the church, particularly if that ordination means the setting apart for the official ministry of the church (i.e. ministry other than that of a deaconess) belongs within the wider question of the role of the laity in the ministry of the church. For those churches which genuinely accept the reformation teaching of the priesthood of the believer a meaningful resolution, not distorted beyond recognition by apologetics, should be within reach. A sacerdotal ministry will find any opening in this respect towards the laity, and particularly women, a painful and guarded exercise. The latter has introduced pseudo-theological considerations or side-tracked the whole issue into discussions about the socio-psychological ability (or inability, as the case may be) of women to fulfill the role of pastors and teachers. The sum of the arguments is that there is something very fundamental in the order of creation as well as in redemption which belongs exclusively to man and not to woman. The argument holds that there are certain spheres of activity which constitutionally belong to woman and others to man. Whether that assertion is true or not is at this point irrelevant. The question to be asked is: if that argument is true when applied to this matter of the ministry of women, which supposedly gives one ground for ordaining men but not women, on what basis is it true? Has God declared it to be so in the Holy Writ or has experience shown it to be a fact? If there is no clear biblical teaching which shows the argument to be true, then one has logically no option but to open the matter up for experience to establish whether there in fact be something fundamental in the order of creation which says that being a minister or priest at the altar of God belongs distinctly not to women but to men." [Jan Paulson, "The Ordination of Women," Aug 5, 1973, initial paragraph]

BIBLICAL RESEARCH REPORT TO 1973 ANNUAL COUNCIL CONCERNING ELLEN WHITE ATTITUDE TOWARD WOMEN IN MINISTRY: "[Mrs White's] description of some women's roles is a right parallel to her description of the regular ministry. If women are legitimately to be paid for a shared ministry with their minister-husbands, and thus 'labor in the gospel ministry,' and some women are to be ordained for a work which sounds more like that of an elder or deaconess, on what revealed or logical grounds should the woman, paid for the work of a minister, be denied the ordination to her ministry which Ellen White counsels should be given to a woman in the elder/deaconess type of role?

"Likewise, if the husband is ordained to the ministry, and the wife is called to 'labor in the gospel ministry' with him, on what grounds should he be ordained and she not?...

"There are two Ellen G White statements which, in the ordinary logical interpretation of the English language give

endorsement to women in pastoral/ministerial capacities....

"The experience thus gained (in the canvassing work) will be of the greatest value to those who are fitting themselves for the work of the ministry. It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepared workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God."--6T:322 [RH, Jan 15, 1901]

"Young men and young women who should be engaged in the ministry, in Bible work, and in the canvassing work, should not be bound down to mechanical employment."--8T:229.

"In our general understanding of language, these two statements would place men and women alike as pastors to the flock of God and as persons to be engaged in the ministry and Bible work and the canvassing work. Elsewhere she encourages young men into these three areas of endeavor, and so there really is no logical reason to assume that only young men should be engaged in the ministry and in the canvassing work, while young women should be engaged in Bible work and the canvassing work. Elsewhere Ellen White does not make such a clean exclusion regarding Bible work....

"When God called Ellen White, a sickly young woman, in an era of considerable hostility toward women in religious roles, to be His chosen messenger (more than a prophet) to His remnant people and to the world at large, is there any way to suggest that a qualified, called, dedicated, humble woman should be denied the highest recognition that the church is able to place upon the calling of God's spirit to service, because she is a woman--especially in an age more favorable to the involvement of women in leadership roles?" [BRI report to 1973 Annual Council]

ONE REPORT FROM AUSTRALASIAN DIVISION TO GC CONCERNING ROLE OF WOMEN IN SDA CHURCH, 1974: "1. While there is need for the Church to give long-range study to the entire question of ordination to both lay and professional ministries of the church (with 80 years to make such progress already behind us), could this fact be legitimately used as a reason to delay progress toward recognition of wider roles for the women of the church? Should all ordinations be held up until these questions are settled?

"2. IT IS ELLEN WHITE'S SPECIFIC COUNSEL REGARDING THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO A TYPE OF ELDER/DEACONESS ROLE THAT CALLS FOR A MODIFICATION OF PRACTICE REGARDING ORDINATION TO LAY MINISTRIES (ELDER, DEACON), AND ONCE THAT LEVEL OF ORDINATION IS RECOGNISED, AND IN THE LIGHT OF THE FURTHER ELLEN G WHITE COUNSELS REGARDING WOMEN IN PASTORAL AND MINISTERIAL ROLES, WHAT PROHIBITION SHOULD THERE BE TO ORDINATION TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY?

"3. Could it be that in the day when God's church should be receiving its final touches of preparation for Eden restored, that the pre-sin equality which God designed for the man and the

woman should be demonstrated more perfectly among His remnant people?

"4. Could there ever be a time when there is a greater need to open all the doors and all the channels to the resources of the Church for the finishing of the work of the Lord in the earth?

"5. Could it be God's intention that the emancipation of woman begun by Christ should have a terminal point before the close of probation?

"6. The cultural differences prevailing in different parts of the world field would call for judicious implementation of broader roles for woman in the Church, but should scarcely require that all parts of the world must await universal readiness.

"7. It is not tokenism that will meet the needs of this particular hour. Neither is there a mere hankering for high office on the part of the women of the Church. But the Church may be out of touch with reality that does not see wisdom in drawing upon the resources and the counsels of its women for the completion of the gospel commission. There are many steps other than ordination to the gospel ministry which could be taken by the leadership of the church that would galvanize into action and renew to deeper dedication the often long-suffering support of the silenced majority of the Church. But ordination to the ministry would show that all doors are open.

"In conclusion I would submit that it is impossible to establish a firm case one way or the other in this perplexing area. I think we will have to acknowledge that the Spirit of God may yet lead us into developments which may run counter to some of our present well-entrenched convictions. Meanwhile, I believe, we ought at least to explore experimentally what might be likely to happen if we did admit certain qualified women into a fuller participation in the work of church leadership and ministry at large." [A S Jorgensen for AUD Committee to Study the Role of Women in the SDA Church, 1974]

W J HACKETT AND GORDON HYDE OPTIMISM IN 1973 VS N C WILSON EVALUATIONS 1988: "I find a very favorable climate here on the part of our brethren in the General Conference toward giving the women of the church a more distinctive and important role in leadership." [WJH to Myron Wehtje, Oct 2, 1973] "In harmony with his promise to the ladies at the [Mohaven] Council, Elder Hackett has already had opportunity to represent a woman's viewpoint in some of the administrative councils now preparing for the [1973] Annual Council. I truly believe that there will be a new sensitivity to the needs and claims of the women of the Church, and this could be a most salutary fallout from the Mohaven Council." [Hyde to Members of the Council on the Role of Women,

Sept 27, 1973]

Neal Wilson address to Association of Adventist Women, Jan 31, 1988: "The president remarked that getting Adventist women into leadership beyond their local congregations has moved at a dismal pace. 'I keep telling my fellow leaders to do something about initiating some of this at the local conference and union level so that the church will have a pool of experienced women to draw from for world leadership. And frankly, that is going terribly slow.'"

GORDON HYDE ON THEOLOGICAL ISSUE CONCERNING ORDINATION OF WOMEN: "It has been interesting to me to see that a number of our theologians, who may disagree on other issues, seem to be generally united in recognizing that there are no significant theological objections from the Scriptures or the Spirit of Prophecy to the ordination of women--even to the ministry. Concerning some other phases of ministry to the Church, we do have the specific counsel of Ellen White regarding the setting apart by prayer and laying on of hands--a piece of counsel which we seem never to have implemented." [to NAD union conference presidents, Dec 5, 1973]

HYDE ON THE WORLD CHURCH ISSUE: "It may not be either possible or desirable to have all areas of the world field move at exactly the same pace in relationship to a wider place being given to the women of the church. For many years we have been able to accommodate ourselves to a North American view and a European and elsewhere view with regard to the use of the wedding ring. We have somehow managed to modify the statements in the Church Manual to make room for these differences on this point. It may well be that we would need to consider the possibility of adjusting the wording of the Church Manual so that it does not either explicitly nor implicitly deny to our sisters access to certain offices and responsibilities in the church, whether lay or ministerial. In fact this was one of the recommendations from the Camp Mohaven Council that the wording be adjusted so that a distinction by sex would not be retained." [to world division presidents, Jan 4, 1974]

COLUMBIA UNION HERITAGE CONCERNING ROLE OF WOMEN: "Regarding the possibility that a day will come in our church when women might become ministerial candidates for ordination, and a woman who might be currently serving, a candidate for a ministerial license--in answer to this, it is my opinion that the actual sex of the person should not enter into the picture....If a young woman feels called to the ministry in her youth and goes through the same educational process on a collegiate level, and then goes on into a scholarship as seminary men do, that hardly anyone would take issue with this process." [W B Quigley, Columbia Union president, to Neal Wilson, June 25, 1974]

FAR EASTERN DIVISION AND ORDINATION OF WOMEN, 1974: "During the

mid-year meeting of our Far Eastern Division committee, with the presidents of our unions in attendance, we spent some time on the subject of the role of women in the church. The materials which were presented at the General Conference annual council in 1973 were placed in their hands for study. Toward the end of the committee, we brought the subject up for discussion.

"While we did not record any action, I did ask for an expression of opinion. With the exception of one or two individuals, all those present indicated that they approved of an increasing leadership role for women in the church and would have no objection to giving recognition to this role by ordination, including ordination to the gospel ministry.

"There was not a single expression of doctrinal objection to ordination of women. While I felt certain that our Division was farther along than some other parts of the world in accepting women in leadership roles, I must admit I was actually a bit surprised at the unanimity of our brethren on the subject. Our group included national brethren from such countries as Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia, in all of which we have nations serving as union presidents.

"So it appears that when and if the General Conference gives the green light for official recognition of women who carry important church and ministerial responsibilities, there will probably be a ready acceptance of this advanced step as far as the Far eastern Division is concerned." [Paul Eldridge (FED president) to W Duncan Eva, June 3, 1974]

PLEA FROM WEST GERMANY, 1977: "Dear Brother Pierson...The reason for my writing is my promise to you to give you some more information about the work of our lady-ministers in Germany. You will remember our discussion about the problem of having extremely able lady-ministers without any chance [for them] to be ordained. The churches this special lady [licensed minister, Margarete Prange] works in always ask why we do not ordain her, since they very soon see her good standing and her spiritual abilities.

"Our sister Margarete Prange has studied a full education at our theological College in Darmstadt. After completing her courses and passing her examinations with getting her diploma she began her work in July 1968 in Bad Oeynhausien. There she remained until the end of 1969 and was sent to Gutersloh, where she worked until May, 1976. From June 1976 she has her responsibilities in Gelsenkirchen, a comparably large church...She has the full responsibilities for this district, and has another intern to guide. To give her the full authority the churches want her being ordained. That is the situation.

"A lady-minister in Germany has the same obligations as her male colleagues. That means she has to give sermons every Sabbath

in the different churches in her district--no matter how large the churches are. They give Bible studies--and we expect the same amount of work of her as of the other ministers. Besides this they have to give religious instruction to the children. Then they have to look for the youth work and the other departments of the church. Public meetings have to be held as well; that means public Bible studies as well as evangelistic meetings. They do not function just as helpers, but have to take an active role in the [church] representations. She is an evangelist!...

"I know that surely there are differences in the capabilities of different lady-ministers. Within the West German Union Conference we have only one of them, and that is Margarete Prange. Now we cannot compare her with other lady-workers. But we are only fair in saying that she is one of our best ministers we have within our Union. This is true in respect of her capability as well as of her baptisms.

"As far as I see--AND YOU SAID THE SAME [recalling a conversation he had with R H Pierson]--there is no reason, neither from the Bible nor from the Spirit of Prophecy, not to ordain female ministers. Surely if they do quite another work in respect to the responsibilities--as you obviously have it in the States--one should think about it if the ordination is necessary. But as we have it here in Germany, where they do just the same work as a male ministers, I think we should try to find some way to give these ladies the full accreditation. Perhaps it would not be good to open the way for the ordination of ladies irrespective of the different countries of the world with their different cultures. But if we as a church could go so far to allow the Unions to decide in the single case, it would surely help. The ordination of a lady should be the exception, but in such a case as we have it here we should find some way to go ahead.

"Please, Brother Pierson, try to find some solution to our problem. If the church could give a free hand in direction of an ordination, it would surely help our lady and it would make happy her churches, because they always press us to this end....

"P.S. I write this letter with the full support of my president, Brother Fischdick, as well with the knowledge and authority given by Brother Kilian, the Union Conference President, and by Brother Ludescher, the Division President."

[Gunter Fraatz, Secretary of Westphalian Conference to RHP, July 1, 1977. Margarete Prange has been licensed as a minister by the Westphalian Conference from 1975 until the present and is thus one of the few women in ministry [all from overseas areas] who continue the 19th century practice of holding the ministerial license.]

RECOMMENDATIONS OF MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE:  
1974-1976-- Recommendation: "The women in the church represent a

vast untapped resource. Their talents and abilities should be utilized in a more meaningful way at various levels of responsibility" and voted to recommend that colleges re-institute the programs for training of Bible instructors and consideration given concept that "Bible Instructor" terminology be changed to the term "Associate Pastors." Also agreed that "encouragement should be given to outstanding young women interested in spiritual ministry to enroll in the M.Div program, in that there is increasing possibility that they may be employed as associate pastors or as Bible teachers."

In 1975, MTAC voted to request GC officers "to give study to establishing internships specifically for Bible instructors, whether they be male or female." MTAC also voted "to recommend to the Annual Council a policy that would strongly encourage young persons taking the ministerial training program at our colleges to spend at least three months in literature ministry before becoming eligible for a GC internship, and further that exceptions to this policy be made only in a few instances."

1976 MTAC: "After it was brought to the attention of the committee that the action taken last year concerning Bible Instructors Internships had not yet been implemented, it was VOTED, to reiterate last year's action and bring it once more to the attention of the GC officers." Also "VOTED, to request the GC to establish internships for female ministers which should not be open to men, and to encourage the conferences to use these internships to avail themselves of the still untapped talents of young women who want to serve the church in the capacity of (unordained) ministers."

MTAC voted to devote its next meeting to a study of the "Role of the Ministry in the SDA Church," from a Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy perspective. A committee was appointed to prepare a statement that would be the basis of the discussion. "After this statement has been studied, edited and approved by the MTAC in its next meeting it will be presented to the GC officers for adoption."

BIBLICAL RESEARCH SUMMARIZATION OF PAPERS ON ORDINATION, 1972-77:  
 "...Discerning leaders who believe in the NT concept of the 'priesthood of all believers' are beginning to ask themselves if they have adequately sensed and thoughtfully related to the fact that at least 60% of those 'believers' are women--and in many local and smaller congregations they may make up 75 to 90% of the membership....The SDA Church has always seen itself as a reforming body, one that is interested in the fullest potential of men and women, boys and girls, everywhere....Discrimination based on sex alone has never enhanced the church's image. But it remains an indisputable fact that women have had little or no role in the decision-making functions of the church...."

"Could it be then that the message and the example of Jesus

were intended to restore the partnership of the man and the woman as it was before sin?...It is illuminating to see how often God called a woman to sacred leadership, interestingly in the prophetic role more than others. What Jesus did for women and what He allowed them to do for Him (Paul likewise) is highly challenging. One could justifiably see in these relationships a pointing toward a greater partnership relationship between men and women in the Lord. Just as there was a pointing to a domination of the distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, and between slave and master, in Christ....

"It is the writings of Paul that are invoked most by those who feel that the role a woman plays in the church is a matter of divine commandment. And it is true that some strong prohibitions are laid upon the woman in a few Pauline expressions, especially if taken in isolation from context, or generalized without consideration of other relevant statements.

"One has to consider also whether prohibitions called for in the NT setting were intended to be universal principles. Frequently there are time and place factors that demand consideration.

"How carefully, therefore, are all the words of Paul concerning women considered. For example, if Christ declared of Himself 'But I am among you as one who serves' (Luke 22:27) and Paul states that a husband is to love his wife in the way that Christ loves the church, who really is subservient to whom in the marriage? Are the constraints in the marriage relationship to be carried into church life without modification? Is the man-women relationship in the church identical to the husband-wife relationship?...

"In the SDA Church organization, women have served effectively in such roles as nurses, secretaries and teachers. As deaconesses, Bible instructors, welfare leaders, Sabbath School teachers, literature evangelists--no question. But in management, as members of boards or commissions--seldom. On local or union conference committees- or General Conference--a sprinkling. One may wonder why. Has the womanly approach to issues nothing to offer? Should her difference from man be seen as inferiority? Is that Christ's view? The 'priesthood of the believer' concept is limited, in women, to the more supportive roles. Where leadership roles are concerned the priesthood of all believers is limited to males. And yet Peter gives no intimation of such a limitation in his references. (See 1 Pet 2:5,9).

"In this respect it is interesting to contemplate denominational history. Thirty or forty years ago women were quite frequently treasurers and departmental leaders in conferences, local, union and general--more so than today. Not a few carried a fruitful pastoral and evangelistic role--short of conducting a baptism--even though they labored under some other

designation. One wonders why the retrogression? Were there problems or were more men coming through theological training?

"It is pertinent to consider the role of the best-known woman among SDAs--Mrs Ellen G White. Some might wish to minimize the significance of her being a woman since the call to a prophetic ministry among us was first given to two men --and one of them 'a mulatto'--before Ellen Harmon was called. Should this fact be understood to show that God would have preferred a man? Or should it be presented to show that God was equally willing to call a woman? Should it even be used to show the greater willingness of a woman to bear the cross involved?

"Be that as it may, this church has been taking various readings on this question of the roles of women during the past four or five years. And invariably the question of ordaining women to the ministry seems to become the focal point at issue....

"As the church looks at the broader aspects of the roles of women it is interesting to contemplate that for more than 80 years the church has had inspired counsel to set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands selected women who could give leadership in a type of welfare-deaconess lay role. (RH, July 9, 1895) The church has yet to implement this counsel.

"Eighty years ago the church was counseled that a minister's wife who felt called to soul-winning work at her husband's side (even if it meant making satisfactory arrangements for the care and oversight of their younger children) should be paid separately from an in addition to the salary of her husband. (GW 4522-53) This counsel has yet to be implemented....

"Is it conceivable that if Adventists had followed the inspired counsel on the roles of women in these areas 80 years ago, they might have been led into further areas during the remaining twenty years of Mrs White's life? In any case, had they been obedient to the light given, would they not have been so far in advance of the 'liberation' movement that it could have had no appeal? There might well have been no basis for government agencies to accuse Adventists of discrimination....

"Inspired writers, ancient and modern, nowhere explicitly discuss the matter. Neither are there examples or principles that would have the weight of explicit divine prohibition or endorsement today. There are favorable arguments that some would deduce from certain considerations, but there are countering arguments.

"It is, however, a serious matter for the church to consider when able, humble and earnest young women present themselves to our colleges and the seminary asking admittance to ministerial training and claiming to have heard the call of the Lord to the

ministry. The church has to weigh such a conviction most carefully, lest she be found out of touch with leadings of the Holy Spirit.

"At the same time, as with a young man, the church has to be able to recognize the call of the Lord to the ministerial candidate. A conference committee has to be able to extend a call. Churches or institutions have to be ready to welcome the candidate. There would presumably need to be additional General Conference internships made available to young women or at least discrimination would need to be removed from present practice.

"Annual Council actions have taken the position that the whole world field should be open to calling women as ministers before they could be called to any part of the field. Who could not agree that it would be ideal for the world field to be united on the proposal at the outset. On the other hand, we do make regional or divisional distinctions on other matters of church polity. (The position on the wedding ring is an example.)...

"Today it is asked: Should we risk splitting the church over the question of ordination of women?...Is the unity of the Adventist church really fragile enough to be shattered by this matter?...

"The above observations, tied to the work done over a period of several years by the BRI and an associated study committee, provide the consensus of those involved that there is neither theological mandate nor objection to ordination of women to any level of responsibility for which ordination is indicated. At the same time it is recognized that the church has to be led of the Spirit into such new areas and the BRI has no desire or intention to become the prime advocate. The BRI sees as its responsibility to give to church leadership the benefit of the trained scholarship of the church. How to share such knowledge with the church at large and how and when to move is seen as the responsibility of church leaders at all levels...." [Gordon Hyde, "A Summary-Report to BRIAD on Roles of Women in the SDA Church," 1977.]

NEAL WILSON STATES HIS POSITION, 1985: [Near the conclusion of the 1985 Women's Commission meetings] "Neal C Wilson outlined his thoughts on the issue as follows:

"1. From 1973-75, his position was more favorable toward ordaining women than it is today. He put a great deal of faith in the reports from the Camp Mohaven meeting but did not study them carefully. But our liberty should never be a stumbling block for others. He has become much less certain and increasingly apprehensive regarding where such changes as ordaining women will carry us. Even though he is not basically opposed, he does not feel there is a good case for the ordination of women.

"2. The experience of other churches would indicate the need for caution. Ordination is something on which the world Church must stand together. He then read the following excerpts from the Spirit of Prophecy:

"'But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms....Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support.' (GC 595) [Editorial note: Since there appears no direct Biblical support for general adherence to a church manual or working policy, one must wonder just how generally the above principle is to be applied. See James White response in the second document of this study.]

"'...Thus though the authority and the creed of Rome were rejected, not a few of her customs and ceremonies were incorporated into the worship of the Church of England. It was claimed that these things were not matters of conscience; that though they were not commanded in Scripture, and hence were nonessential, yet not being forbidden, they were not intrinsically evil. Their observance tended to narrow the gulf which separated the reformed churches from Rome,...

"'To the conservative and compromising, these arguments seemed conclusive. But there was another class that did not so judge. The fact that these customs 'tended to bridge over the chasm between Rome and the Reformation'...was in their view a conclusive argument against retaining them....They reasoned that God has in His word established the regulations governing His worship, and that men are not at liberty to add to these or detract from them. The very beginning of the great apostasy was in seeking to supplement the authority of God by that of the church. Rome began by enjoining what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined.' (GC 289-90)

"3. There is a possibility of unintentionally neutralizing the Scriptures by stating that certain passages are culturally conditioned.

"4. In making as big a change as recommending the ordination of women, the burden of proof must be on the arguments proposed in support of the change, otherwise it is our responsibility to protect what we have. Proof must be convincing, overwhelming and beyond reasonable doubt.

"5. This issue (ordination of women to the gospel ministry) must be settled by a General Conference Session. It would appear that if the matter were presented now, it would not be acceptable to the Church as a whole.

"6. We need to be honest and not mislead people. If we have

no intention of moving toward the ordination of women we should say so.

"7. If past actions are to be considered a mistake, should the Church return to its former position? The steps taken by the Potomac Conference may have been a matter of mistaken judgment in the desire to rally all available resources and talents for the work of God. But they have not been taken in rebellion, but with wide counsel. Taking all the factors we have discussed into consideration, probably we should maintain our present position with some modifications.

"a. Treat the young men and the young women who have the same training and have been called to pastoral responsibilities in the same way by providing opportunities to perform. If we move ahead we will give affirmation to women who (a) feel they have been called to fulfill the pastoral role, and (b) experience recognition of their service in the call of a conference, even though they may never be ordained.

"b. Make an earnest appeal to the world Church to do something for women in ministry, giving them opportunities to work in departments, administration, business and management areas, and revive the work of Bible Instructors.

"c. Develop a partnership ministry of ministers and their wives.

"d. Reform ordination practices so ordination will not be just a status symbol." [NCW statement before Role of Women in the Church Committee, March 28, 1985.]