

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day

June 10, 2006

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Resource Packet

God's Place for Women in Ministry

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Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Produced by Department of Women's Ministries
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

My Dear Sisters:

Enclosed is the Resource Packet for the 2006 Women's Emphasis Day titled "God's Place for Women in Ministry." This program was prepared by Priscilla Matimba Ben of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) and has been prepared with much prayer and thought. In past years Priscilla served as Women's Ministries director for SID so she knows of the challenges you face in your ministry.

The focus of this packet is on the importance that God places on each woman to minister for Him wherever she may be. Feel free to adapt the information to suit the women in your cultural setting. Remember, this is a day when we celebrate women who have given of their time, talent, and even their lives to serve God. Take time to recognize some of these women and to praise God for their joyful service.

We are asking that you place emphasis on three divisions. They are the Euro-Africa Division, South Pacific Division, and the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. The following pages contain reports of the work in these divisions and we seek your prayers on their behalf. This information can you included in your Sabbath School program by women dressed in the costumes of some of the countries found in these divisions. The ideas are many.

The work of Women's Ministries would not grow if it was not for your allowing God to use you to minister to women. As you present this program, please emphasize the need for all women to have a ministry that touches the lives of those in need as we tell of Jesus love.

Love and joy

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heather-Dawn Small". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather-Dawn Small
Director

Table of Contents

	Page
About the Author	3
Featured Divisions	4
Worship Service Outline	6
Outlined Sermon	7
Optional Reading	14
E.G. White Quotes	15
Women's Ministries – How to Be Involved	16

About the Author

Priscilla Ben is publishing director for Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division. She served as Women's Ministries director of the former Eastern Africa Division. After teaching home economics for 12 years she became a full-time literature evangelist. She also served as the conference and union publishing director in Zambia. Priscilla is married to Pastor Strike Ben (Botswana) and mother of one daughter.

Featured Divisions

- **South Pacific Division**
- **Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division**

South Pacific Division

Joy Butler, Director of Women's Ministries

Territory: Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the thousands of islands in the Pacific straddling the equator and south of it which are Cook Islands, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Pitcairn Island, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Samoa, Tokelau, Kiribati. The membership is 368,682 as at June, 2005.

There are 4 Unions in the SPD.

The **Papua New Guinea Union Mission** has the major portion of the division membership and Women's Ministries grows in support and outreach every year. Thousands of women attend retreats, workshops and prayer programmes. There has been a strong emphasis on prayer ministry and Prayer Power Houses are being constructed, often out of grass, on mission compounds, in church grounds and in Sabbath School rooms. Miracles are being experienced and healings take place as women turn to God in prayer for their families, friends and their nations. Where there is war between tribes, Women's Ministries has been a significant factor in bringing about peace. Teen retreats for mothers and daughters are a feature and now boys want the same.

In the **Trans Pacific Union Mission** there are thousands of small islands scattered across a broad section of the vast Pacific Ocean. Women's Ministries Leadership Certification programmes are being conducted in almost every mission and women are being empowered to realize their potential and to conduct outreach programmes. In the Solomon Islands they are now very active in conducting retreats whereas in the past they have been unable to do this because of major political unrest. The women are leading the way in restoring and rebuilding their nation through strong prayer programmes in most churches. Women travel long distances by small planes, boats, canoes and walking through thick bush and narrow mountainous tracks to attend events. Many professional Adventist women are committed to lending their support to Women's Ministries as dentists, doctors, nurses, teachers and business women.

The **New Zealand Pacific Union Conference** includes a French connection with the two island nations of New Caledonia and French Polynesia. Both these groups lend a colourful and beautiful touch of tropical paradise to all women's events. A recent congress for this mission gathered over 200 women from the many islands scattered across the Pacific. Churches in New Zealand have conducted evangelism preaching series with resulting baptisms. In New Caledonia every year they invite the public to the Abuse Prevention Awareness day with professional women leading. There has been a very strong emphasis on Women's Ministries Leadership training for the last 3 years with over 200 women graduating from Level 1 and retreats continue to grow.

The **Australian Union Conference** has 9 Conferences where the attendance at women's retreats grows every year. These retreats provide friendship, support, networking and inspiration to 1000s of women every year. The retreats have become famous for their excellent organization and touch of elegance. Many non-Adventists attend and those who are having a break from church. As a result, women have returned to church and others have been converted. Most conferences produce newsletters which describe their particular outreach and encouragement. Local church Women's Ministries outreach programmes are experiencing an

expansion as women realize their worth and responsibility. The indigenous Aboriginal women of Australia have recently become involved in Women's Ministries and plan to have a Women's Corroboree in the centre of Australia in 2007.

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Emilienne Rasamoely, Director of Women's Ministries

Territories in SID:

Angola, Botswana, Comoro Islands, Kerguelen Islands, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Reunion, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Ascension, St Helena and Tristan da Cunha Islands; comprising the Southern Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe Union Conferences, and the Angola, Botswana, Indian Ocean, Malawi and Mozambique Union Missions.

In **Angola and Mozambique Unions**, a literacy program "From the Bible to the Bible" is used to teach people to read as well as telling them about Christ and his love for them, making use of the Bible as reading material. The program is presented by local Women's Ministries leaders and other volunteers to whole communities, including non-adventists and is proving to be a successful way of evangelizing, apart from empowering women.

Botswana Union is running a strong health ministry program, covering Breast Cancer Awareness; HIV/AIDS Programs where especially young ladies are challenged to refrain from pre-marital sex by making use of the program "Integration of Faith and Sexuality". Mother/daughter Relationship Building programs are presented as a means of strengthening the young person's moral framework in our society of today.

One of the major problems facing women **within the SID territory** is the HIV/AIDS Pandemic, and Women's Ministries in all our unions are deeply committed to assist victims (sufferers), orphans, widows and family members in their battle against it. Training programs are launched to equip women to be self-supporting, providing not only for their own families, but orphans of relatives. Botswana Union plan to operate a bakery on the premises of an HIV/AIDS Orphanage in Maun. This model is later to be copied in other areas.

Self-Supporting Development Programs were newly implemented **in our different unions** and will be continued in 2006 onwards:

- **BOTSWANA** - Training of Personnel of Bakery at HIV/AIDS Orphanage - Maun
- **IOUM** – Fish farming project (early stage) Central Madagascar Mission
- **SAU** – Vegetable farming project for HIV/AIDS orphans – Western Cape
- **MALAWI – SOUTH MALAWI FIELD:** Banana growing Project
- **ZIMBABWE** – Brick making (early stages) BULAWAYO
- **ZAMBIA** – Bundoli Girl's Bakery and Mushroom Project, South Zambia Conference
- **ANGOLA** (Luanda and rural areas, spreading to all the churches) and **MOZAMBIQUE** (Maputo)– Literacy Project, also funded with donations from Professional Business Camp meeting in Johannesburg, February 2005.

In **Madagascar** there are strong revival outreach meetings in several regions. Other Unions also plan to include revival and spiritual nurture programs, especially reaching out to new converts. Materials are freely available to everybody.

God's Place for Women in Ministry

Worship Service Outline

Call to Worship	Hebrews 10:23-25
Opening Song	Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal # 341 "To God Be the Glory"
Pastoral Prayer	Please keep in mind the special needs of women in – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Southern Asia Division• Southern Asia-Pacific Division• North American Division your local congregation and Women's Ministries in general.
Offertory Reading	2 Corinthians 8:3-5 (optional)
Offertory Song	Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal # 369 "Sowing in the Morning" (optional)
Responsive Reading	You choose. Bearing the theme in mind
Special Music	You choose. Bearing the theme in mind
Children's Story	You Choose.
Sermon	God's Place for Women in Ministry
Closing Hymn	Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal # 359 "Hark the Voice of Jesus Calling"
Closing Prayer	

Sermon

God's Place for Women in Ministry

INTRODUCTION:

The nominating committee for City Centre Seventh Day Adventist Church in Harare Zimbabwe, Africa had just completed nominating the officers for the new church calendar year and Alice Mafanuke (Maa-faa-nuu-ke) was chosen to lead Women's Ministries Department. It was not very clear to her what the Women's Ministries Department was all about and she was very uncomfortable to lead. However, with encouragement from the local church pastor and his wife, she accepted to be the leader that year. That was 5 years ago. In May 2005 Alice had a testimony to share and she was bubbling with joy as she shared the experiences she is going through in her new congregation in Marondela (Maa-roo-ndee-la) Zimbabwe. Alice says in that area, the Women's Ministries department together with the young women from her new church are meeting with about 60 non-Seventh-day Adventist women on a monthly basis and are using seminar evangelism to reach out to the needs of women. So far they have conducted many seminars including Stress Management, Parenting, Estate Planning and Writing Wills, Abuse, and Finance Management etc. All the women who attend the meetings for the first time are given two books – Desire of Ages and Steps to Christ. These women have expressed a desire to invite their families to benefit from the seminars as well.

Women's Ministries. Is there a Biblical basis for such a ministry? As you continue to develop or conduct programs for Women's Ministries in your local church it is important to study and know what the Bible teaches about women, their needs, and their responsibilities before God. The Bible provides a program that speaks with authority and power to the needs of women. Today I would like to present five reasons from the Bible that shows the worth God places on women and God's place for her in ministry.

I. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR A WOMAN’S WORTH AND GOD’S PLACE FOR HER IN MINISTRY.

A. Qualified by original design

One of the first things the Bible tells about women is that they have been created in the image of God.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen. 1:26-27)

The first reason that woman can enjoy a sense of worth is that she was created in God’s image.

Women are qualified for ministry through creation.

B. Qualified by redemption

The second reason Christian women can enjoy a healthy sense of self-worth and feel confident to minister is that she was redeemed at great price.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. That whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

With salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in each individual (I Corinthians 6:19, 20) and each is given spiritual gifts. Each redeemed woman is responsible to live a life of dependence upon the Holy Spirit and of obedience to God.

Women are qualified and equipped for ministry by redemption.

C. Qualified by Old Testament example

A third reason women are qualified for ministry is that in Scripture God used women in ministry for Him.

Miriam the sister of Aaron (Exodus 15:20-21), is called a prophetess, one who speaks God's word; and in Micah 6:4 God tells Israel that he set before them as leaders Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

The Bible says women were "skilled" and "willing" and voluntarily contributed of their possessions and worked with their hands in constructing the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:21-22, 25-26).

Most of us remember Deborah as the one who commanded Barak to lead the army. But he was reluctant to accept the leadership position that God had called him to which resulted in Deborah accompanying him into battle. She was also a judge and a prophetess of Israel (Judges 4:4-8).

Abigail rescued her household by demonstrating great courage and initiative. She gave King David wise counsel, reminding him that he was called of God and saving him from taking murderous revenge (I Sam 25).

The entire book of Esther recounts the story of a courageous young woman who risked her life and comfortable position to save her people from an enemy who desired their death.

Proverbs 31 describes a woman who is often overwhelming to women who consider all that is written about her. Here was a priceless woman who feared God, cared for her family, managed her home, and used all her abilities and talents.

Women in the Old Testament participated in worship, art, family life, and community life with creativity, decisiveness, freedom, and authority. They used their gifts and talents to serve God and to influence their families and their nation. It is important to realize that women were never forbidden to speak in public in Old Testament times.

Women are qualified for ministry by Old Testament example.

D. Qualified by the example of Jesus

By the time of Jesus' earthly ministry there was great degradation of women. Rather than being equal with man, she had become nothing more than a man's property in many cases. In Jesus' day, Jewish men prayed, "Praise God that I am not created a Gentile. Praise God that I am not created a slave. Praise God that I am not created a woman." But Jesus changed all that. He showed love, concern and respect for women.

As a little child, Jesus showed respect for women by obeying Mary, his mother. Even in his agony at the cross, one of His last concerns was to provide for her future.

Let's take a look at four Bible stories that reveal Jesus' attitude towards women. After all, what better example do we have?

1. A Woman's Place (Luke 10:38-42)

In this passage we find the story of Martha who was busy serving while Mary her sister sat at the feet of Jesus. In Jesus' day the Jews believed that a woman was not worthy to understand the Law. Her place was in the home caring for the needs of her husband and family. But in this remarkable incident Jesus clearly indicates that a woman's place is not only in serving but learning. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and He taught her.

2. A Woman's Sin (Mark 14:1-9)

The story of a woman overwhelmed with gratitude to Jesus for his gift of forgiveness and mercy. She knew that there was no double standard with Jesus. He accepted her. Her repentance and sorrow were great—her tears were tears of sorrow as well as joy. Sorrow for her sin, but joy for the Jesus' forgiveness. Her expensive gift was small but costly and represented all she had to give. And Jesus honored her for her sacrifice.

3. A Woman's Gift (Luke 21:1-4)

In this story we find a poor widow whose gift of two copper coins surpassed the

rich gifts of those who had more left than they gave. Jesus praised the woman for her willingness to be generous with what she had.

4. A Woman's Witness (Mark 16-1-11).

Here we find the resurrection story. Who had the love required to go visit the sepulcher and bathe the dead body of the Savior with spices and ointments? Who was it who first had the courage to go and see if anything could be done for Jesus with the Roman soldiers everywhere around? To what human voice was it given to be the first to say, "Jesus is risen from the dead"?

Women are qualified for ministry by the example of Jesus.

E. Women qualified by the example of the Early Church

What about women in the early church? Can we find historical precedent for a ministry by women? Women were present in the upper room when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon believers (Acts 1:9-14).

Like Lydia and Priscilla many hosted the early church meetings. There were no church buildings until the third century, so all the early church meetings were conducted in homes. Women were active in ministry in the early church.

In the book of Acts alone we find specific women named. Acts 18:24-26 tells us that Priscilla was a teacher who taught Apollos. Lydia, in Acts 16, was the first convert in Europe and hosted the church at Philippi. In Acts 9 we read of Dorcas who was called a disciple, a helper of widows and the poor. And in Acts 23:8.9 we read of Philip's four daughters who were prophetesses.

Women in the early church were active in public worship. Often in reading I Corinthians 11 regarding women and head coverings, we become so involved in the head covering and that we forget the first words of verse 5, "*And every woman who prays or prophecies.*"

These women were speaking God's word and praying in the public worship service.

Women were considered qualified and were given opportunity to minister in the early church.

Women are qualified for service by the example of the Early Church.

II. CALLED TO MINISTRY

If we can see from Scripture that Christian women in general are qualified for ministry, can we find Scripture extending to her a call to be involved in ministry to others?

Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost, both men and women. He seeks to restore them to their original creation—the image of God. Jesus, who is our example ministered to women restoring their value as human beings. We live in a world where restoration is sorely needed, and women have been called to help in this restoration process by ministering to one another.

Let us read two New Testament texts that tell some specific works of ministry God has called women to do:

Titus 2:3-5. “Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slave to drink; they are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited.”

I Timothy 5:10. “She is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.”

Then E. G. White gives us further clarification on a woman’s role. She writes:

“The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. If they are imbued with a

sense of their duty, and labor under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they will have just the self-possession required for this time.

“The Savior will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance and will give them a power that exceeds that of men.

*“They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed.” **Evangelism, page 464***

*“Let every woman realize the sacredness of her work and in the strength and fear of God, take up her mission. **Testimonies to the Church, Volume 3 page 565***

God has given women a great responsibility. He has called them to minister both to other women and in families. Along with this call He also provides the gifts (Ephesians 4:11-16) and the power (Philippians 4:13) needed to perform the task.

Women understand women. Women have a sensitive side that is suited to working with families in need. We must teach them the Word of God so that they can be equipped for service. We must encourage them to use their gifts to serve each other and the world around them. We must help them learn how to share, not only the Good News of a loving Savior and the hope of His soon return but to reach out and touch families with God’s love and care.

III. CONCLUSION:

Each woman is unique – there is no one like you or me in the entire world. Each of us is influential in the sphere God has given us in which to make an impact – our family, church, place of employment, friends and neighbors. For that reason each of us is responsible and accountable to God for how we use our gifts and opportunities He has given us. Each of us will stand before Him individually as a woman, as a minister for Christ.

Optional Reading

In the beginning God created the
heavens and the earth....

The world yet incomplete
on the sixth day God created her
WOMAN.

God looked at all that He had made
and saw that it was very good.

And God said to her,
WOMAN
I have created you in my
image and likeness and
YOU ARE GOOD.

Then
sin entered the world
and death through sin.

But
God so loved the world
that He gave His only Son
to be born of a Woman;
to live and die and rise again
that man and womankind
might have eternal life.

Therefore,
If a woman is in Christ Jesus,
She is a new creation;
the old life has gone; the new life has begun.

And God said,
Behold I will create new heavens and a new earth.
Be glad and rejoice forever
In what I will create.

A paraphrase by Anne Wham
From Genesis 1, Romans 8, John 3, II Corinthians 5, and Isaiah 63

E. G. White Quotes About Women

- ❖ “When a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to this work, and it will see the loss if the talents of both are not combined.” Evangelism 469

- ❖ “We may do a noble work for God if we will. Woman does not know her power for God...There is a higher purpose for woman, a grander destiny. She should develop and cultivate her powers, for God can employ them in the great work of saving souls from eternal ruin.” Testimonies Vol 4,642 and Evangelism 465.

- ❖ “There never was a time when more workers were needed than at the present. There are brethren and sisters throughout all our ranks who should discipline themselves to engage in this work, in all our churches something should be done to spread the truth. It is the duty of all to study the various points of our faith.” Review and Herald, April 1, 1880.

- ❖ “If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this Holy Mission (one-to-one ministry) their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth.” Evangelism 471.

- ❖ “There certainly should be a larger number of women engaged in the work of ministering to suffering humanity... When believing women shall feel the burden for souls...they will be working as Christ worked. They will consider no sacrifice too great to make to win souls to Christ.” Evangelism 465.

- ❖ “Intelligent Christian women may use their talents to the very highest account... wives and mothers should in no case neglect their husbands and their children, but they can do much without neglecting home duties...” Welfare Ministry, 164.

Women's Ministries – How to Be Involved

Women are an influential force in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When women are ministered to, the family, church, and community receive the benefits of their spiritual strength and their ministry.

You are invited to become involved in a number of ways:

- Through prayer and encouragement
- By helping to see that there is an active Women's Ministries program in your church, conference/field, union and division
- By volunteering your talents and leadership abilities
- Through your financial support

Women's Ministries is involved in sponsoring and developing a number of programs and activities.

Some of these are:

- International Women's Day of Prayer (First Sabbath in March)
- Women's Ministries Day (Second Sabbath in June)
- Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day (4th Sabbath in August)
- I Married a Possibility
- Literacy programs
- Prayer and Love Saves
- Global Mission projects
- Area - wide retreats, rallies and congresses
- Prayer groups and prayer chains
- Small group ministries/Bible studies
- Church hospitality
- Mentoring young girls and women
- The Widow's Mite
- Leadership Training etc

Six critical issues

There are six critical issues that particularly impact women around the world. These issues are:

1. Illiteracy
2. Abuse
3. Poverty
4. Health risks
5. Work loads
6. Lack of mentoring and leadership training

As Christians, seeking to follow the example of Jesus, we believe that it is important to do what we can to meet the needs of all people, developing trust, and helping them to find the answer to their needs. For this reason, Women's Ministries has chosen to focus much of its attention to these challenges.

Before much can be done to address most of these needs, a person must be able to read. Almost one adult cannot read: about three-fourths of these are women. They cannot read the instructions on a medicine bottle, fill out an employment form, or read the directions for a household cleaner. Neither can they read a Sabbath School lesson to a child nor read the Bible. Like many in the Dark Ages, they must get their Gospel from someone else.

These are certainly challenges for everyone in the church. Women's Ministries invites all to join together to share the Good news of the Gospel!

Adapted from GC Women's Ministries Handbook.