

Rediscovered: Latin
America's Female Pioneers

It Wasn't
Bathsheba's Fault!

The Nearly
Forgotten Ordination

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Adventist *Today*

Ten Years After the First Official
Ordination of Women in the Seventh-day
Adventist Church, *Adventist Today* Revisits

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

features

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The Best Way to Win Full Women's Ordination Is to Fill Our Pulpits With Women Pastors

By Lindsey Abston Painter

ABOUT 10 YEARS AGO, SOME OF THE CHURCH LEADERS in North America, after struggling for years to get the blessing of the General Conference (GC) for ordaining women in each division that wished to do so, realized that they didn't actually need GC permission and began doing it on their own.

It had long been written into policy that the union conferences decide which clergy to ordain within their territory. These leaders proposed (and meetings of their constituencies agreed) that since it is up to individual union conferences—not the General Conference—to make decisions for local work, the union conferences could allow their local conferences that wished to ordain women to do so.

Soon thereafter, ordinations of women pastors, chaplains, and church leaders took place in the Columbia Union and the Pacific Union. The momentum spilled over to Europe, with leaders there adopting their own forms of protest against the prohibition. Other union conferences stated their intention to follow in the footsteps of their peers.

In this issue we look back at our denomination's history of women's ordination, focusing especially on the past 10 years. We celebrate the courage of those who pushed forward, and we ask, What's next?

A Flood of Preaching Women

Many votes have been cast in the Adventist Church on the issue of women as clergy. The one that affected me most was in 2015, when the General Conference Session voted that individual regions, or divisions, could not decide to ordain women. It was an enormous blow.

When a few courageous church leaders boldly said that they would ordain women anyway, my heart leapt! Soon, I thought, a tide of women would be successfully pastoring churches. Their talent for ministry would no longer be hidden! After all, nothing succeeds like success. In my mind's eye, I imagined hundreds—even thousands—of women serving faithfully in churches all over the world. I imagined Adventist world leaders encouraging and incentivizing young women into ministry. Perhaps they'd occasionally have the courage to assign them to skeptical congregations, and once their churches saw the talent, energy, and wisdom of these women, even the most hesitant skeptic would be won over.

Little girls growing up in Adventist churches would see leadership modeled to them, and little boys would grow up respecting the leadership and authority of women. Eventually, with the obvious success of women pastors, even the General Conference would no longer be able to deny that women are called by God and deserve to be treated accordingly.

Waiting

So, I waited patiently for the flood of women ministers, championed by these leaders who spoke with such authority.

But where is it? It has now been 27 years since the vote to commission women, which (while not a full ordination) gave women permission to do virtually all pastoral work. It has been 10 years since the Columbia Union and the Pacific Union ordained any women.

Apart from China, when it came to actually assigning women pastors to congregations, the leaders' courage failed them—especially here in North America, but probably elsewhere, as well.

The number of women in ministry is hard to count, according to Nerida Taylor Bates, president of the Association of Adventist Women. The determination of whether or not a woman is considered a pastor depends on who is doing the reporting. Does the statistic include literature evangelists, or only those who have tertiary theological education? Bates' research, presented in an article on the *Spectrum* website, shows that outside of China, about 1,600 women are reported as pastors worldwide; however, that number appears to include chaplains, children's

Do we believe that women are equal to men, equally called by God into ministry? Prove it. Get women pastors into churches right now.

ministers, administrators, and teachers. The pastor count for North America shows 150 women, but if teachers and others were added to make the statistic comparable, that number would rise to 377 (about 8%). Although China shows a whopping 3,176 female pastors, Bates casts doubt on that number, since the latest report is from 2015. (The denomination claims it has approximately 20,000 pastors of both sexes worldwide, but that number could also be in doubt, depending on how judicatories define "pastor.")

Clearly, women have gained ground as Adventist clergy. But is it a flood? Given that women could perform all pastoral tasks beginning in 1995, I don't think so. Apart from China, when it came to actually assigning women pastors to congregations, the leaders' courage failed them—especially here in North America, but probably elsewhere, as well. Congregations that were unsure about having a woman pastor weren't challenged to accept one.

While several programs have encouraged women to go into ministry, in the absence of full recognition, they've not been very successful. Those who bravely chose to study for ministry anyway often found few opportunities awaiting them upon graduation, and while many are attending the seminary, it appears that few are becoming pastors. Some women in ministry toiled in obscurity or ended up as hospital chaplains or children's leaders.

So after all these years, I ask the same question that Carmen Seibold asked in her article about women in ministry in the Winter 2019 issue of *Adventist Today* magazine: "What are we waiting for now?"

Let's suppose that church leaders had started in 1995, when women were first commissioned (the precursor to ordination) to move into pastoral positions. Making progress required more than supportive words; the leaders needed to push the issue. If women today accounted for 25% of total pastors in the regions that were willing to ordain women, I doubt we would still need to discuss the issue. It would already be obvious that women are fit to lead in ministry, and our churches would have improved as a result of their skills and talents.

Yet, here we are. Still waiting.

Women Pastors? Nothing New

You will read in this issue that even in Latin America, women were in leadership in the Adventist Church for a century before we began going backward. I've seen the ordination

certificates proving that Ellen White was ordained into ministry (see page 7). Seventh-day Adventists started with a woman leading us. Why would we stop now?

Some fields, although they appreciate Ellen White, have resisted women's ordination, citing cultural factors. Let's be clear that virtually all of the discussion around this issue has been to allow those fields that want ordination to go forward with it, not to force it on anyone.

In my world—represented by North America, much of Europe, plus Australia and New Zealand—Christians expect not only that women should minister with equal credentials, but that the church would greatly benefit from it. As a woman myself, how can I continue to support and attend a church that has made it abundantly clear it does not support me as an equal in Christ with my brothers?

People in my age group and younger (and some older!) are leaving the church. Equality of women isn't the only reason for this mass exodus, but it is part of it.

Good intentions aren't enough. It's time to show the courage to place female pastors in our churches.

Window of Opportunity

We have a unique window of opportunity. For the first time in my nearly 40 years on this planet, the General Conference's power and influence appear to be waning. Thanks to decisions such as those made in America 10 years ago by union conferences on the East Coast and West Coast, local and regional decisions are becoming more meaningful to our members. This is a chance to move forward.

I am not writing this to bash our leaders or to express bitterness about the direction the General Conference has been steering the church. I am writing to celebrate our women pastors. To encourage them.

I also want to challenge our church to be more bold. Taking the slow path and “not making

waves” means that the young, educated people we say we want to keep are realizing that their values do not align with church values. Do we want to keep hemorrhaging members?

Do we believe that women are equal to men, equally called by God into ministry? Prove it. Get women pastors into churches right now. Aggressively recruit and incentivize women into ministry. Set up an organizational structure to support and encourage them. Don't let reluctant churches or loud anti-woman voices hold us back.

Preparing the Next Generation

I heard a story recently that moved me. A friend of mine saw a woman preacher for the first time when she was about 30 years old. She tells of how moved she was the first time she heard a woman preaching a powerful sermon from the pulpit. The experience was life-changing—in the most literal way. She was so affected by it that she returned to seminary in mid-life to prepare for ministry herself! She is now one of the Columbia Union's ordained women.

The value of seeing female representation in pastoral leadership cannot be underestimated. Right now, God is calling little girls who are sitting in the pews but who put it out of their minds because they see only men in the pulpit. What a tragedy!

Let's not let the most conservative people in the denomination become the standard by which the entire church must live or, in the process, extinguish the fire for the rest of us. That is the path of death for the church.

We have leaders who believe in the equality of women. In the film version of one of my favorite fantasy series, *The Lord of the Rings*, the son of a king is exhorted to “show us your quality.” Now is the time for our leaders to show us their quality.

The flood of women pastors can still begin. We're waiting. **AT**

Unfinished Business

Union Ordination Votes 10 Years in Review

BY JIM WIBBERDING

Maud was ready to lead, but was the church ready for her? The mission of Adventism caught her heart at age 11, while she watched the pioneers organize their movement at Battle Creek in 1863. Her passion drew her to the publishing work when she was 16 years old. Maud enjoyed coming of age in the shadow of Adventist giants, but she tired of the glass ceiling. A woman of vision with a knack for details, she chafed at being “the help” when she knew she could lead.

With every hair tucked neatly in its place, chiseled jaw set with resolve, and bright eyes fixed toward Ohio, she burst the bubble of Battle Creek to lead her own branch of outreach. The year was 1877, and Maud Sisley had just taken the biggest risk of her life. Like other female pastors and evangelists of the time, her best chance to live out her calling was in a state at the expanding edge of the movement, where necessity had less time for limits.

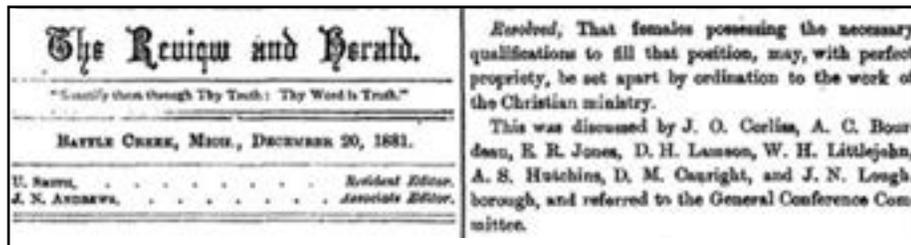
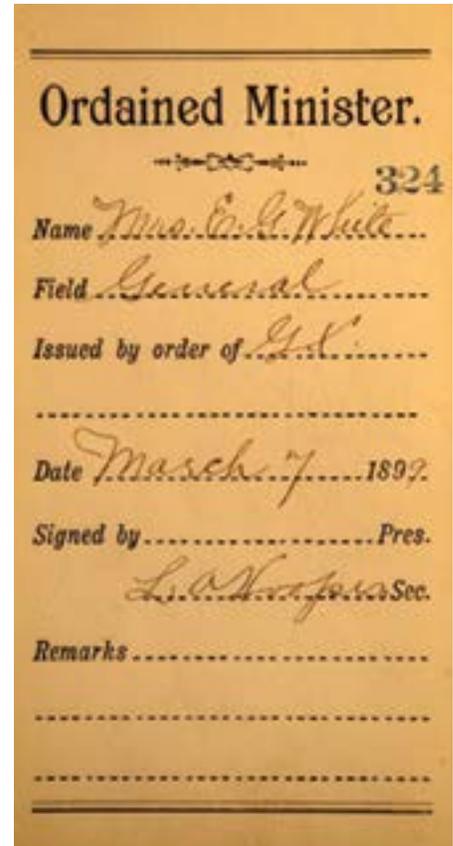
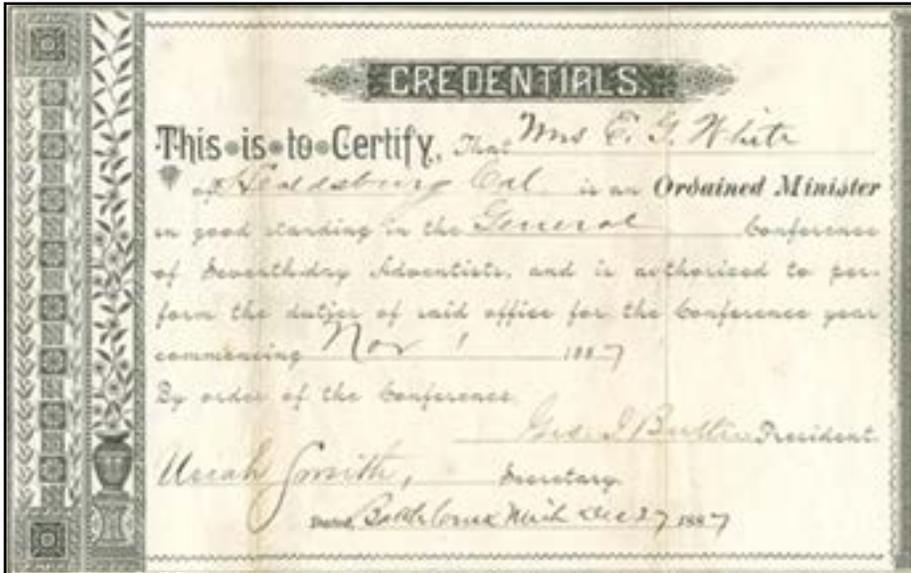
Twenty years before, while defending the right of women to preach, James White had voiced a limit on women in leadership that still blunted their potential. He said that while they could certainly preach, “The sisters would be quite out of place in meetings of general church business.”¹ The glass ceiling was set at administration. James had since shaken that idea from his own thoughts, as Ellen became central to church business, but other believers hadn’t.

Maud’s missional risk paid off. When Evangelist Joseph Waggoner came to town in 1877 to reap the fruits of her ministry, word got back to Battle Creek that Maud could lead. They hired her to pioneer ministry in Switzerland—and later England, South Africa, the Pacific Northwest, and Australia. Forty-five

years later, at the 1922 General Conference Session, the San Francisco crowd rose to their feet to applaud Maud Sisley Boyd—by then a household name—as a woman of firsts in the growth of Adventism. Ironically, this very session codified a shift toward fundamentalism that would push women from leadership.

Joseph Waggoner’s 1877 encounter with Maud appears to have stirred his thoughts on women in ministry. The next year, he published an article in *The Signs of the Times* that argued fiercely that women should preach the message. Waggoner kept the glass ceiling at administration, however, concluding that Paul did not allow women “all the duties of business meetings ... or all the duties of ruling elders, and pastors,” but they could do “all that pertain to exercises purely religious.”² John Andrews, James White, Ellen White, and others joined the conversation on the pages of *Advent Review* and *The Signs of the Times* over the next year. That discussion soon coalesced into a full-throated endorsement of women in church leadership.

In response to this conversation, sparked by the good examples of Maud Sisley and other female leaders, Adventist pioneers were poised to smash the barrier that limited women to preaching.



Clockwise from top: Ellen G. White received the credentials of an ordained minister from 1871 until her death 44 years later. In 1881, *The Review and Herald* reported a historic vote by the Adventist pioneers: “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.”

Their proposal read, “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.”³ The resolution went to committee and was quickly adopted.⁴ This meant women could lead at all levels of ministry, including “general church business” and “all the duties of ruling elders, and pastors.”

The church had licensed women as ministers since 1869, when Sarah Hallock Lindsey received her first license, but it appears that only Ellen White had the “credentials” of an ordained minister—a practice that started in 1871 and continued for the next 44 years of her life.

Culture Shifts

The Adventist pioneers could now see further beyond the hierarchy they inherited. From their earliest days, they recoiled from the beastly impulse to stand above others and dictate their

choices (a reference to Revelation 13). As such, they did not assume institutional or creedal authority over anyone. Now, their biblical arguments in favor of women preaching had pushed them beyond that functional concern to oppose gender hierarchy in ministry, too.

As the story of Adventism and gender unfolded, ironically, this same anti-authoritarianism left the door open for that beastly impulse to plague generations yet unborn. Our non-creedal pioneers were not in the habit of voting a theological position on much of anything, so they never formalized their doctrinal views on gender equality. Neither did they adopt the authority to canonize policy. With this lack of official dictates, the progressive views of the pioneers were lost in the shuffle as Adventism later drifted toward creedalism and policy-heavy governance.

The 1920s were not good to women in ministry. Adventists let fundamentalism push them back toward male dominance. Ellen White’s death in 1915 also left Adventists without their best



Photo courtesy of Elen G. White Estate



Photo from her autobiography, courtesy of Review and Herald Publishing



Photo courtesy of Center for Adventist Research

Flora Plummer (left) spent over 20 years as the only woman on the General Conference Executive Committee. Educators Alma McKibbin (center) and Sarah Peck (right) were among the Adventist women who helped create one of the largest school systems in the world.

living illustration that women could lead. Women who were already in ministry stayed, but younger women did not replace them as they retired, and these older leaders got pushed to the margins of the church.

Flora Plummer, an architect of Sabbath School as we know it,

The General Conference has no voted policy on the ordination of women to pastoral ministry, unless we count the 1881 resolution. Both sides of the aisle have misunderstood what happened with GC Session votes in 1990, 1995, and 2015.

spent more than two decades as the only woman on the General Conference (GC) Executive Committee. Women such as Sarah Peck, Anna Knight, and Alma McKibbin continued to build the Adventist school system into one of the world's largest, but eventually they had to retire. The widowed Minnie Sype—an evangelist, conference

leader, and district pastor for three decades—made the mistake of getting remarried at age 61. Conference leaders served her with retirement papers, since she now had a man to “bring home the bacon.” What a nice wedding gift!

Culture had pushed Adventists away from gender inclusion in the 1920s, but it later pushed the other way. The women's rights movement of the 1960s spurred the conversation again, and by the '70s, Adventist biblical scholars were poised to help. In 1973, the biggest names in Adventist theology converged at Camp Mohaven in Ohio to study women in ministry. When the dust settled, they had found no biblical reason to keep women from ministry and recommended placing female pastors where the culture would allow it. The General Conference Annual Council voted to merely “receive” their report. Theology was not enough, it seemed, to overwhelm the residual protectionist culture of the '20s.

Policymaking

Conspicuously, women remained some of the most reliable local church leaders. In 1985, this led the Annual Council to approve the ordination of female elders. In 2010, the General Conference voted in Session to do the same for deaconesses. These remain the only General Conference policies on ordaining women—both affirming.

The General Conference has no voted policy on the ordination of women to pastoral ministry, unless we count the 1881



Photo courtesy of Ellen G. White Estate



Photo from her autobiography, *Life Sketches and Experiences in Missionary Work*



Photo courtesy of George I. Butler Collection Archives and Special Collections University Libraries, Loma Linda University; Loma Linda, California

Maud Sisley Boyd (left) pioneered evangelism in Ohio, the Pacific Northwest, Switzerland, England, South Africa, and Australia. Minnie Sype (center) was an evangelist, district pastor, and conference leader in the North Pacific Union for three decades. Sarah Hallock Lindsey (right) in 1869 became the first licensed Adventist woman minister.

resolution. Both sides of the aisle have misunderstood what happened with GC Session votes in 1990, 1995, and 2015. It is true that a committee recommended—and delegates at the 1990 GC Session voted—not to create an affirming policy. It is also true that the GC Sessions of 1995 and 2015 considered proposals to give the divisions of the General Conference authority to make their own policies about ordaining women, and these motions were defeated. Plenty of strong rhetoric framed these votes, but they did not change policy.

We must understand that the failure to create these affirming policies did not create opposite policies. That is not how policymaking works. The simple proof is in the absence of any rule in the massive General Conference Working Policy book forbidding the ordination of women.

This growing knowledge of policy converged with deep conviction, and the realization that policy leaves ordination to the union conferences, to create a moment worth remembering and repeating. Unions began ordaining women to pastoral ministry.

A Movement in the NAD

It all started when the North American Division (NAD) hatched a plan to amend the E60 policy. Even though no explicit policy prevented union conferences from issuing ordination credentials to women, the NAD had kept up the practice of ordaining men while commissioning women. Over time they had taken steps

to make the two credentials more equal, but an inequity in E60 remained. The E60 policy makes ordination a qualification for serving as a conference president. Such a criterion obviously keeps women from that role, but it also screens them out of other roles down the chain from a presidency.

Every union conference across North America can mark this 10-year anniversary of hope by completing this righteous work. Vote to ordain pastors without regard to gender.

NAD leaders had worked on the amendment plan with their GC colleagues, until a new GC president came on the scene in 2010. President Ted Wilson set out to kill the plan—and he did. He argued that church unity required uniformity on ordination. His own convictions about male headship also appeared to

complicate matters. Wilson's maneuver had a different effect than he planned.

Columbia Union leaders met with delegates at their Constituency Session the next year, and 80% of delegates voted a union policy to ordain "without regard to gender." Next, the Pacific Union Constituency Session passed a similar resolution with 79% support. From a policy perspective, this was not necessary, because GC Working Policy already gave union conferences "final authority" over whom to ordain; however, the symbolic value was immense.

The dominoes had begun to fall. The E60 failure in 2010 led to the Columbia Union vote in 2011, which informed the

The staggering, false assumption in each example provided here is that church leaders have the right and duty to control their constituents. They do not.

2012 Pacific Union vote. The Mid-American Union also voted conceptual support in 2012. The work of historical leaders such as Sarah Hallock Lindsey, Maud Sisley Boyd, Sarah Peck, Alma McKibbin, Minnie Sype, Flora Plummer, and Ellen White was finally being validated. Across the NAD, other union executive committees teetered on the edge of decision, but when the quaking settled, no more dominoes had fallen.

Matters of Authority

Part of what kept other union conferences from voting on equal ordination were threats of reprisal. Additionally, Ted Wilson had begun to call himself "president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," a title that assumed authority over the whole church rather than one administrative unit among many. Before the ordination votes of Columbia Union and Pacific Union, he had told delegates they did not have authority to vote "yes" on equal ordination, because the General Conference was not giving its permission. The underlying issue was on full display. This was about authority.

Policy allowed for the union conferences to move forward, because it gives "final authority" over matters of ordination to unions (GC Working Policy B05). That practice of distributed authority has a long backstory of its own in Adventist history. The pioneers had structured the church to avoid this kind of top-down behavior, especially by (1) placing decisions in the hands of constituencies throughout the organization and (2) giving no level of the organization authority over another. This was an explicit concern when James White, Joseph Bates, John Loughborough, and the others organized the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early 1860s, and it was the reason for its radical reorganization in 1901. Ellen White had called for the end of "kingly authority" in 1901, and in response, the brethren created union conferences with independent authority.

Yes, union constituents had both the authority and the duty to make independent decisions. President Wilson opposed this intended order and worked to strip authority from union constituencies. Wilson either misunderstood church structure or bet that enough Adventists misunderstood it for him to change the balance of power.

There is too much to tell about attempts to strong-arm compliance on ordination. Of course, the General Conference president pushed compliance committees into place in 2018 to punish union conferences that ordain women. The same administration threatened hostile takeovers of those unions. We could tell of the failed attempt to "rig" the results of the 2011 Theology of Ordination Study Committee by stacking the roster with non-scholars who opposed women in ministry, because they couldn't find enough biblical scholars to take that position. You might recall the voting system scandal at the 2015 GC Session, which many viewed as an attempt to steal the vote on ordination.

Then came the shameful public scolding of union conference presidents in 2019, for letting their constituencies use the authority that only they hold to vote for equality. There is plenty more to tell. The staggering, *false* assumption in each example provided here is that church leaders have the right and duty to control their constituents. They do not.

Perhaps the most embarrassing moment came after the Southeastern California Conference elected Dr. Sandra Roberts as its president in 2013. Since she now had ordination credentials from the Pacific Union, she met all of the qualifications of the office. Her constituents had elected her with a 72% majority. Nonetheless, the General Conference president refused to recognize the authority of Southeastern California Conference constituents, maneuvering instead to keep Roberts from being seated as a representative of her conference at GC meetings and to exclude her name from the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*.

On some level, none of this should surprise us; the bad theology that validates a gender hierarchy already accepts the premise of hierarchy in the human family. Its roots are in that old temptation to “be like God” (Gen. 3:5), which led the first man to “rule over” the first woman (verse 16). It is the same premise that eventually grew into slavery and racial disparity and every other structure that shrinks human value. “To be like God” is the original sin, and it has no place among the followers of Christ. In fact, Jesus warned, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves” (Luke 22:25-26, NIV). No, “you are not to be like that.”

The list of women impacted by hostile or tepid responses to women in leadership did not cease with Sarah, Maud, Sarah, Alma, Minnie, Flora, Ellen, or Sandra. When we leave the status quo untouched, we increase the space in which the women among us suffer harm. When we preserve the status quo, we support a use of authority to which Jesus replied, “You are not to be like that,” and which Ellen White decried as “kingly authority” that must be stopped.

What Now?

It is time for North America and other parts of the world to help the dominoes fall again. A decade has passed since the NAD, Columbia Union, and Pacific Union tried to start the cascade. Since then, an isolated domino has fallen from time to time—somewhere in the world—but it is past time to pull our union conferences together and restart the cascade. Every union conference across North America can mark this 10-year anniversary of hope by completing this righteous work. Vote to ordain pastors without regard to gender.

Let me suggest that each union recapture that moment when the Adventist pioneers were moving past the same inequity and once again vote that 1881 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.”

Do it to reassert the primacy of Scripture as a guide to our practice. Do it for the generation of Adventists pining for the church of their parents to do the right thing. Do it for the women who have been injured for too long and too often by gender norms that deepen the wounds of sin. Do it because God calls us to heal the fractures in the human family, starting with the first to appear after sin: gender inequity. Do it because God’s Spirit is tugging on your heart to do it.

The Adventist story of gender and church leadership is filled with proud moments and defeats, with heroes and the hesitant, with the Spirit’s movements and bureaucratic foibles. The last chapters are yet unwritten, and it falls on us to write them. Let us be certain that the heroes don’t falter and that righteousness wins the day.

Who will nudge that next domino? **AT**

¹ James White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 10, no. 19 (Sept. 10, 1857).

² Joseph Waggoner, “Woman’s Place in the Gospel,” *The Signs of the Times* (Dec. 19, 1878), p. 380.

³ *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (Dec. 20, 1881).

⁴ *The Signs of the Times* (Jan. 5, 1882).

PIONEER WOMEN FORMED & LED ORGANIZATION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

By Daniel A. Mora

AT THE 30TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL Conference (GC) of Seventh-day Adventists in 1909, Arthur G. Daniells, in his president's report to the delegates, recalled the names of missionaries and officers who died during 1908. He noted among them "Mrs. E. T. Nowlen, of the Central American [Conference]" and said that "their names will be remembered by others, as of the company of those who rest from their labors, while their works follow them."¹

Within the Inter-American Division (IAD), however, Daniells' words would not be remembered 113 years later by contemporary Adventists, nor would the work of Ethel Nowlen, the first woman elected as executive secretary and treasurer of the Central American Conference. Nor would the names of dozens of other Adventist women pioneers and missionaries, who formed the early structures of the Adventist

organization in Central America and what was known as the West Indies Field, since its establishment in the mid-1890s. These women were passionately dedicated

In the 1900s, the General Conference placed three women to serve as the only officers in charge of their missions in Central America, until a president was appointed.

to advancing Adventism, and their effort would lead them to occupy and direct the work at the levels of missions, conferences, and unions.

The limited historical information that Adventists in the IAD have about their female pioneers has produced a narrow vision of what Adventist women actually did in the Caribbean, British Guiana, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela. To acknowledge that women led the church as treasurers, executive secretaries, and interim presidents for missions, conferences, and unions runs opposite to the paradigms built for decades in Central America. These knowledge gaps have caused a disconnection and discontinuity between the rich historical heritage of the first IAD Adventists and the current vision of women's leadership.

It is unclear whether Adventist historians and chroniclers deliberately omitted the abundant information in the denomination's historical archives or if the archives of their local fields were lost or destroyed. One rare published gem is a 1907 book by George Enoch, who



Photo courtesy of ancestry.com



Photo courtesy of Yvette Sparrow, Helderberg College



Photo courtesy of ancestry.com

While Isaiah and Lura Moore (left) were missionaries in Cuba, Lura was in 1906 appointed the first executive secretary-treasurer of the Cuba Mission. In 1926, when the East Caribbean Union Conference was established, Ethel Edmed (center) became the first woman elected as a union-level executive secretary-treasurer. After the General Conference sent Mary and D.D. Fitch (right) as missionaries to Puerto Rico, Mary served as the Adventist mission's executive secretary-treasurer from 1916 to 1919.

recognized the important contribution of women among the Adventist pioneers in the Caribbean. For example, Enoch wrote of two local women, Elizabeth Elwin (1887) and “the slave mother” from Barbados (1880), who provided the basis for Adventist development in the Caribbean. He also reported the later contribution of the first Adventist missionaries—husbands and wives who did their missionary work as an inseparable team.²

Also, M. Ellsworth Olsen highlighted the impact of both men and women in the early formation of the IAD, some of whom took Adventism to their countries of origin.³ Other historians, who focused exclusively on highlighting the image and position of men, marginalized the pioneer women to make their contributions appear subordinate or supportive,⁴ or simply deemed them unworthy of mention.⁵

By reviewing available published historical information, this article will show how Adventist pioneer women helped to form and consolidate the Adventist organization, holding administrative positions in IAD missions, conferences, and unions between 1906 and 1940.

Pioneers in the Inter-American Division

The IAD was established in 1922, so my historical review of Adventist pioneer women in Latin America and the Caribbean is divided into two periods: 1902 to 1921, and 1922 to the 1940s. (In the early 1950s, women were displaced by ordained pastors.)⁶ The first period was critical and decisive in the expansion of the Adventist message, the opening of missions, and the founding of the first local conferences.

From 1906 to the 1940s, women played a leading and decisive role in development of the Adventist organization in unknown

and impressive dimensions. Women held the positions of treasurer and executive secretary at the mission and conference levels, on a par with men. These positions were created when the General Conference was organized in Michigan in May of 1863, with Uriah Smith elected as its first secretary.⁷ The entities that would be subsequently grouped with the GC, especially the local conferences, would utilize these same positions.

Lura Edna Collins Moore (1878-1938). Shortly after completing the nursing course at Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan, Lura Collins married Isaiah Moore, and together the newlyweds agreed to become missionaries to open the work in Havana, Cuba.⁸ On May 9, 1904, the Moores arrived in the municipality of Marianao.⁹ In 1905 they organized the first Adventist church in Havana, and in 1906 the denomination established the Cuba Mission. Pastor Elwin Snyder became its president, while Lura C.



Photo courtesy of GC Jordan App (<https://jordan.adventist.org>)

In 1922, the Adventist pioneers who established the Inter-American Division met in Trinidad for their first organizational meetings.

Moore was appointed as executive secretary and treasurer.¹⁰ In July 1909, the Moores returned to Iowa, where they engaged in medical missionary work. Lura's other contributions included working to expand the Adventist message through *The Life Boat* magazine, for which she worked as a stenographer, and helping to establish Antillian College, the first Adventist college in Cuba.

Ethel Threadgold Nowlen (1873-1908). We know from a letter by Elder Francisco Westphal that Ethel arrived in Buenos Aires around 1893. He wrote: "A young English girl, Ethel Threadgold, was with us. She had learned the truth taught to her by Mr. and Mrs. Craig on her departure from England."¹¹ In 1896, Ethel married colporteur Clair A. Nowlen, who in 1891 was the first missionary to arrive in South America.¹² On April 5, 1907, the West Indian Union requested "the transfer of C. A. Nowlan [sic], to Central America, to engage in the work of colporteur."¹³ The

action was approved on May 19, and the Nowlens joined in the work with Elmer L. Cardey when they arrived on May 21 in Belize, where the Adventist work was established and the Central American Mission was functioning.¹⁴

From March 5 to 15, 1908, administrative meetings were held in Ruatan, now part of Honduras. William A. Spicer, the GC secretary, attended these meetings, where the mission was reorganized into a Central American Association.¹⁵ Ethel Nowlen was elected by the delegates as executive secretary and treasurer, while Pastor Cardey was elected president.¹⁶ In April, Marjorie Ruth, the 8-year-old daughter of the Nowlens, died of a fever in Belize.¹⁷ Ethel had to bury her daughter alone, since her husband was with Cardey, opening the Adventist work in Guatemala, and the two men did not know anything about the tragedy.¹⁸ In July 1908, Ethel wrote a report in *The Review and Herald* to report on the challenges

they were facing in Guatemala. She said, "The one comforting thought in it all is that the battle is not ours, but the Lord's, and that though there are great walls to be encountered, his Word can cause them to fall, as did the walls of Jericho."¹⁹

Months later, Ethel's health deteriorated due to an intestinal problem. On December 10, the General Conference took an emergency vote to move her from Guatemala to Graysville Sanitarium in Tennessee.²⁰ Despite the efforts of medical staff, Ethel died on Dec. 29, 1908. Faced with the tragic news, GC leadership paid a tribute to her leadership as the executive secretary of the Central American Conference. Elder Cardey, president of that conference, expressed the impact of the news for Adventists in Central America.²¹ Arthur Daniells named her in his May 3, 1909, address to the GC Session delegates. And William A. Spicer praised her work, recalling Ethel's character in these words: "Regardless of

the gifts that made her a valued secretary in the conference work, our sister had that bright, cheery temperament that is a blessing in itself to any field.”²²

Mary Anna Fitch (1884-1972). In 1915, the General Conference voted to send Pastor D. D. and Mary Fitch as missionaries to the Puerto Rico Mission.²³ In 1916, Mary Fitch was appointed as secretary-treasurer of the mission, and William Steele became its president.²⁴ She held that position until 1919, when the GC called the Fitches to evangelize in Venezuela, where they worked until 1924.²⁵ In various publications and reports on the progress of the cause in Puerto Rico, Mary Fitch’s activities are noted as the “secretary-treasurer.”²⁶ She also helped Adventist missionaries in Venezuela through the friendship she developed with Indalecia Gómez, the sister of dictator and caudillo Juan Vicente Gómez, who was president of Venezuela at the time. The government of Venezuela granted Adventists permission to perform their baptisms at the Chorro del Avila in Caracas, the country’s capital.²⁷

Ethel Maud Edmed (1890-1988). In 1925, Ethel was appointed executive secretary and treasurer of the Leeward Islands Mission, headquartered in Antigua.²⁸ During the Annual Council of the Inter-American Division in July 1925, held in the Canal Zone in Panama, Ethel attended as an officer of the mission and a member of the council.²⁹ In some publications of the *Inter-American Division Messenger*, you can read the financial reports and the progress of the Adventist work in her field.

In 1926, when the East Caribbean Union Conference was established, items on the agenda included the election of a secretary and treasurer. Ethel Edmed accepted the call, becoming the first woman in Adventist history to hold this position in a union conference. She held



Photo courtesy of Maier-Lutz family

Newlyweds Alfred and Hanna Lutz served first in Guatemala and then Nicaragua, where Hanna became the first woman to head an Adventist mission in Central America.

this post until September 1927, when she had to return to England to care for her father’s ailing wife.³⁰ In 1934, after her father’s death, Ethel received a call to work at Helderberg College in South Africa.

Women at the Head of Their Missions

In the 1900s, the General Conference placed three women to serve as the only officers in charge of their missions in Central America, until a president was appointed. They, possibly unknowingly or without realizing the situation, maintained the stability and operability of their local fields in critical moments.

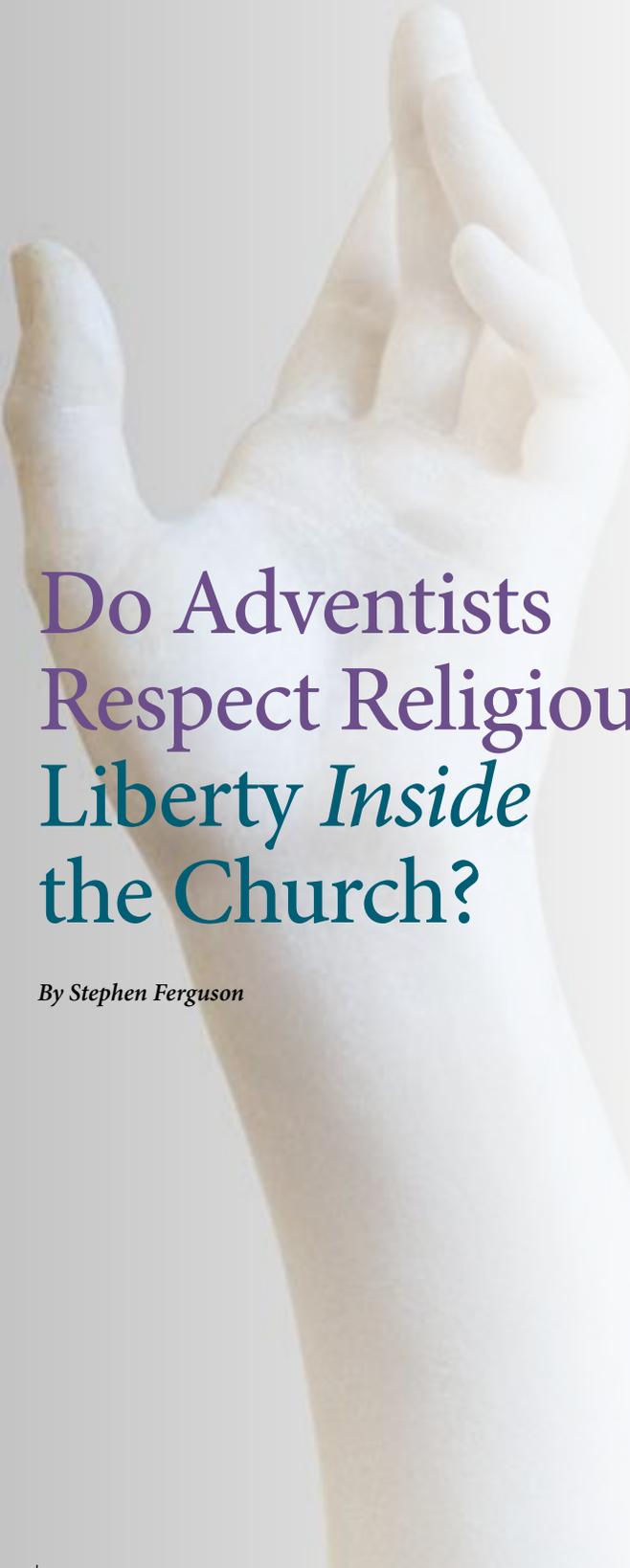
Hanna John Lutz (1908-1999) was elected secretary-treasurer at the Guatemala Mission from 1932 to 1934.³¹ From 1935 to 1936, Hanna held the same position at the Nicaragua Mission. She remained the sole officer in charge of administration there until 1938, when A. H. Roth transferred from the Panama Conference to become the mission president.³² Hanna and her family moved from Nicaragua to settle permanently in

Honduras, and she died in the capital city, Tegucigalpa, in 1999.

Emma Rodríguez was appointed as secretary-treasurer of the Nicaragua Mission from 1938 until 1940 and then became its acting president when C. P. Crager transferred to the Colombian-Venezuelan Union.³³ Emma served as the mission’s top administrator from 1941 to 1942, until Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Jones arrived from the Santo Domingo Mission.³⁴

Marie Fanselau (1899-1991) moved from Germany to Honduras as a missionary in 1928 with her German colporteur husband, Gustav Adolf Fanselau. They both dedicated themselves to work in Central America and contributed to the formation of the magazine *El Centinela*, in addition to raising their three children. In 1931, Marie (listed in the Yearbook as Mrs. A. Fanselau) was appointed as secretary and treasurer in the Nicaragua Mission,

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Do Adventists Respect Religious Liberty *Inside* the Church?

By Stephen Ferguson

RECENTLY I CAME ACROSS A STATEMENT TITLED “THE CHRISTIAN Declaration on Conscience,” prepared by a small group of Seventh-day Adventist clergy. What motivated these men to write appears to be our denomination’s embrace of medical measures for COVID-19 prevention, as well as its refusal to grant religious waivers against mandated vaccines.

This statement has been promoted on well-known conservative Adventist websites, by well-known conservative Adventist leaders. You can read the declaration in full for yourself, but I will highlight a few extracts that resonated with me:

“The inviolability of conscience is the essence of religious freedom.”

“The Church must not impede the promptings of the Holy Spirit upon an individual’s conscience...”

“Each individual has the unalienable right to care for their body based upon the dictates of their own conscience without organizational or governmental interference.”

“The right to bodily integrity is rooted in the biblical principle that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

“We reject the use of coercive means to restrict liberty of conscience whether by the State, Church, or other entities. We condemn the suppression of liberty of conscience by termination of employment.”

“Conscience belongs to the individual, not to the State, Church, or any other entity.”

“Clergy must be free to nurture individuals in matters of conscience, even in the face of coercive policies.”

I agree in principle with these statements. I, too, value freedom of conscience and religious liberty.

Inside the Church

I found the declaration important because these Adventist clergy were not merely promoting religious liberty *outside* the church, as our denomination does whenever proposed or newly passed legislation affects us. They were asking us to respect religious liberty *inside* the church, as well. The statement is full of references to the actions and omissions of the church leadership in this matter.

Of course, liberty is not unlimited. Any organization expects its members, and especially its leaders, to adhere to its core tenets. A person who doesn’t believe in the right to bear arms is not a good candidate for membership in the National Rifle Association. A person who denies the existence of climate change has no

business joining Greenpeace. A person who supports the death penalty would not be the right fit for Amnesty International. And Christians cannot cite liberty of conscience to disregard the pillars of their own faith.

As I studied the declaration, I was interested to see that at least three of its four sponsors were members of the anti-women's ordination group, Ordination Truth Council of Pastors. In other words, the majority of those publicly supporting "The Christian Declaration on Conscience" have a history of strongly and angrily opposing women's ordination.

This left me confused. I thought these men were for freedom—for religious liberty in the church.

Why should we be generous to a view of creedal orthodoxy that asks the church to be respectful of your body, when you do not show that same respect for someone else's body?

Please Decide

What would I say to them—and to you, if you agree with the principle of freedom under Christ but refuse to accept women ordained to ministry? I would say: Please decide if you are for religious liberty or not.

Do you condemn the world church for using its authority, coercive policies, and organizational influence over matters of conscience? If you do, where were you when the General Conference exercised its powers, coercive politics, and organizational influence over freedom-of-conscience decisions about the role of people with female bodies being ordained as pastors? Where was your respect for bodily autonomy then?

As I see it, if your congregation is happy with a pastor who isn't vaccinated or won't wear a mask, what is that to me? Go ahead. If I don't agree, I won't attend your church. Yet if my congregation wants a female minister, what is that to you? If you don't agree, just don't attend my church. That would show respect to my liberty—and hers.

Why should we be generous to a view of creedal orthodoxy that asks the church to be respectful of your body, when you do not show that same respect for someone else's body?

Why should we respect your biblical interpretation as it relates to religious liberty, when you have no interest in respecting anyone else's? Because if we want to get cute about it, there seems to be as much biblical support for opening the clerical office to woman as for refusing COVID-19 protection measures. If it is the biblical principles in our 28 fundamental beliefs that define freedom of conscience, then tell me, Which fundamental belief prohibits women's ordination? Tell me, then, which fundamental belief prohibits women's ordination? I can't see one. In fact, Fundamental Belief 14 suggests that women *should* be ordained. By contrast, one could make an argument that Fundamental Belief 22 supports mandatory COVID-19 health-safety measures—or at least excuses the Church from helping you to dodge them.

Are you for choice, or are you for denominational mandates? Please make up your mind. (Note: the 2015 General Conference vote on women's ordination was not asking for a worldwide mandate on female pastors. Rather, it was simply adopting a liberty-of-conscience approach in which each division would have freedom to make a choice. Here was the wording: "Is it acceptable for division executive committees, as they may deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry? Yes or no.")

In the matter of freedom of conscience, you must decide. If infringing on bodily integrity is so important that it amounts to a sign of the end, as "The Christian Declaration on Conscience" implies, then how do its framers explain their approval of that 2015 vote against pastors with a female body?

To be blunt: If your pastor doesn't need a mask or a vaccination, mine doesn't need a penis.

I have changed my mind on many matters. Perhaps you can change yours. **AT**

FEMALE PASTORS:

Outside the Organizational Box

BY KUMAR DIXIT

JESSICA WAS A COLLEGE FRESHMAN WHEN SHE SHARED WITH ME her interest in pastoral ministry and leadership. I was a chaplain at what was then Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University) and an associate at the nearby Sligo Church in Takoma Park, Maryland. She was a dynamic young woman, confident yet humble, a leader in the making, and respected by her peers and teachers.

After talking to Jessica for an hour, I was convinced of her calling. I mentored her, promoted her to a student chaplain position, and watched her thrive, earn good grades, and participate in campus leadership. She was affirmed for her ability to inspire. Upon graduation she was hired as an associate pastor at an emerging congregation in Southern California. She continued her studies, completing a Master of Divinity degree.

Twenty years later, she shared a heartbreaking story with me about how throughout her career she had faced opposition from church leaders and members as a result of her gender. Inequitable church policies put a cap on her service to her church and community, and her career aspirations slowed and stuttered to a halt.

“I’m not mad at God,” she said to me. “I’m angry at my church.”

At least a dozen incredible women I have worked with over two decades in pastoral ministry have admitted their frustration with these manmade barriers and restrictions.

But what is especially painful to me is my sense that I lured them with a false hope that kept them going, only to find in the end that they couldn’t have the same opportunities as their male counterparts.

Inspirational Ministry

This is especially ironic, because women ministers had a tremendous influence on my ministry.

I was still a student at Spring Valley Academy in Ohio when Kendra Haloviak served as an intern at the Kettering Church. I vividly remember her thoughtful sermons. In that progressive congregation, I don’t remember hearing any discord due to the fact that a woman was serving as a pastoral intern. Later she

joined the staff at Sligo Church in Takoma Park, where I served as a student chaplain. Eventually I studied under the tutelage of Dr. Kendra Haloviak Valentine, now a pre-eminent New Testament scholar.

On Nov. 4, 1995, more than 3,000 congregants packed into the Sligo sanctuary to witness Kendra, Penny Shell, and Norma Osborn become the first ordained female pastors in the denomination. (Sligo had a long history of hiring women in ministry: Kit Watts, Norma Osborn, Esther Knott, Gail Enikeiv, Rebecca Brillhart, and Josephine Benton.) Tears filled my eyes, and I knew that I wanted to serve God as they did.

God is generating this talent and interest. More than 30% of students at the Adventist Theological Seminary are women. So why are so few hired into actual ministry? Yes, misogyny still exists within church leadership. But there is more to it than that.

Unnecessary Barriers

I have had many conversations with lay people on church boards that reveal a systemic prejudice against female pastors, by both men and women. The North American Division offers local conferences matching dollars to hire female pastors, but this incentive doesn’t seem enough to help congregations accept women in the pastoral role.

When I served as the ministerial director of the British Columbia Conference, I witnessed this gender discrimination firsthand. My job description included staffing churches. I discovered that the overwhelming majority of churches led by lay members, both men and women, didn’t want a woman as their pastor.

“So let me ask you some questions about your preference in a pastor,” my administrative colleague would ask. “Do you want a young person or an older pastor? Do you prefer a conservative or moderate? Would you be okay with a male or a female pastor?” About this last question I privately chided him, reminding him that this line of questioning was not only technically illegal, but also prejudicial. The better practice would have been to offer the church three qualified

candidates, without considering gender, and then allow the church to choose.

A pastor who was struggling with conflict within a church would often ask to meet with the conference leaders, to pre-empt an emerging problem with the church elders or even to make a request for a transfer or sabbatical. All pastors struggled at times, but female pastors operated under unique pressures. Once, a female pastor asked to meet with me and the executive secretary. She was nervous and came alone. “As you know, my husband and I have a 2-year-old child. I am very grateful for the maternity leave I was given when we had our child.” She paused and swallowed before continuing. “My husband and I think it is time to expand our family, but before we try, I want to make sure it is okay with you, to make sure our decision won’t upset the conference.”

I sat stunned by such a deeply personal question. Here was a humble, cowed servant of God seeking permission from a group of men to bring life into this world. I remained calm on the outside, but I boiled inside. How many male pastors would ask this question of their bosses? Not one. What kind of church culture had we created that made a female employee feel obliged to ask for permission to have a child?

I was aware that some Adventist women had set aside marriage and a family to succeed in pastoral ministry, believing this work ethic would address the concerns of a congregation that she might not meet the full demands of her position. Others felt pressured to secure the stability of a husband and children, to show the congregation that they are mainstream representatives for their church. Sometimes it seemed as if women pastors were “damned if I do, damned if I don’t.”

We don’t seem to know how to provide healthy emotional support for pastoral families in general, and this is especially true for women in ministry. No matter what choices they make, they know that their opportunities for upward mobility or transfers are limited. Many women pastors face dormant careers at one or two congregations. No wonder so many move on to other fields, such as chaplaincy.

An Undercurrent of Disappointment

I am asserting that for all of our efforts to bring women into ministry, the Adventist Church is faced with a disheartened first generation of women pastors. These sisters have suffered from an inherent inequity that puts them in a box, which prevents them from fulfilling their inspired potential and has caused them personal and spiritual pain.

It is a fact that many conferences are facing pastoral shortfalls. In light of my own experience—being mentored by women clergy

in my own calling and, in turn, supporting female pastors—I struggle to understand why conferences are not more eager to tap their neglected pool of talent, vision, and energy. I would assert that many of the women in ministry are actually more talented and effective than their male counterparts. By shunting aside women clergy, Adventist congregations are shortchanging both themselves and their communities.

False Hope

I stand guilty myself of giving false, misguided hope to many women. “You guys encouraged me into ministry,” Jessica said to me on that fateful day of accounting. She seethed with anger as she described the painful, lonely journey she’d embarked upon. “At the onset of my career, you propped me up and told me how amazing it was going to be. You were one of these liberal, progressive pastors who felt good about yourselves for encouraging women like me to go into ministry. You patted yourselves on the back, receiving praise from others for how forward-thinking you all were. But you bore none of the trauma or consequences I have faced.”

Was Jessica correct in her assessment? Did I push her (and at least nine other women I mentored) into ministry without realizing the lack of support and resources for them? I wonder: why should they be encouraged to pastor in our denomination, if members and administrators don’t know how to assist and encourage them?

A Call to Advocacy

A Pew Research Center study revealed that even among large denominations that employ women in ministry, few women occupy top positions.¹ Another Pew study exposed the decline in church attendance by women.² This dramatic shift has raised eyebrows, since women have historically been the backbone of congregations, in attendance and participation. “Women are growing increasingly disenchanted with the Church,” said one study. “Female volunteerism plunged 31 percent over the course of 20 years.”³

I vow to stand in the breach with a pair of sharpened box cutters, to help free these women from the box we’ve put them into and to let them serve the omnipotent and omnipresent God who has equipped them to fulfill His purposes to His eternal glory. **AT**

¹ Aleksandra Sandstrom, “Women Relatively Rare in Top Positions of Religious Leadership,” *PewResearch.org* (Mar. 2, 2016).

² David McClendon, “Gender Gap in Religious Service Attendance Has Narrowed in U.S.,” *PewResearch.org* (May 13, 2016).

³ Jenny Rae Armstrong, “Why We Need More Women in Ministry,” *Relevant Magazine* (Jan. 12, 2022).

THE ALMOST-FORGOTTEN FIRST ORDINATION OF ADVENTIST FEMALE PASTORS

BY PENNY SHELL

ABOUT 10 YEARS AGO, TWO UNION CONFERENCES IN North America began ordaining women to ministry, against the advice of the General Conference. This was the first time in recent memory that a union conference, which is tasked with deciding who in their region to ordain, gave permission for women to be officially ordained and recognized.

But what many don't realize is that women pastors were ordained almost two decades earlier, on Sept. 23, 1995, in the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland. I was one of the women ordained there, and this is my personal story of how my life led to that day.

Before

After 14 years of teaching English in Adventist boarding schools, I decided it was time for a career change and enrolled in Andrews University's degree in Religious Journalism. The program never developed the journalism aspect, so I ended up taking religion classes at the seminary. In 1979 I completed a master's degree in religion.

About this time I heard Valerie Phillips, a hospital chaplain at Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan, speak about her work. I had recently lost both of my parents from cancer: Mom in 1976 and Dad in 1977. The experience with my parents' illness and hospitalizations had given me an inside understanding of the hospital setting and the value of listening to people. I felt a strong connection with the ministry she described.

One day I noticed an advertisement on a bulletin board for Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Loma Linda University (LLU) in California. I applied and was accepted.

After the three months of basic training at LLU, my pull toward chaplaincy had increased. However, certification would require an additional three quarters of CPE. So, after finishing a doctorate in education at Andrews, I completed a nine-month CPE program at the Abington Memorial Hospital in Pennsylvania and began to look for a place to practice my new ministry.

Ordination

The 1970s saw a push for women's equality in the United States and around the world. When Adventists thought about ordination for women, some viewed it as honoring women's call. But others regarded it only as part of a secular "feminist agenda."

The idea of ordaining women to ministry didn't just pop up out of nowhere. Protestant Christian women had been ordained to ministry for decades. Gender equality in Adventist ministry had come up for discussion and recommendation to the General Conference as early as 1881, with a resolution "to ordain women" that was never implemented.

Supporters and detractors of women's ordination have continued to disagree at least since that time. Yet Adventists offered much early support for women ministers, largely because of the prophetic calling



Norma Osborn, Kendra Haloviak, and Penny Shell were ordained in 1995 in the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland.

I wanted to belong to a church—my church, the Adventist Church—that affirmed the ministry of men and women equally. Belonging to an inclusive church was more important to me than being ordained.

of Ellen G. White. Early Adventist publications presented scriptural support for women positively.¹

In the 1980s, when I was drawn to chaplaincy, I wasn't thinking of ordination for myself, though I did find it painful to acknowledge the ongoing negativity toward ordination of women in my church. In my lifetime the topic had been discussed and rediscussed, studied and restudied, debated and redebated. Although the majority of those studies agreed that the church should provide equal support for men and women in ministry through ordination, official change in policy did not follow.

In 1984, after I'd finished my CPE, I sought employment as a chaplain. My lack of ordination was an immediate impediment. One chaplaincy administrator told me: "We need to have all of our chaplains completely qualified. We already made an exception for one female chaplain who isn't ordained. We can't have more." Another hospital told me: "We would like to hire you. You are well-qualified. But why would we hire you when we can get an ordained person?"

Now I was feeling the consequences of not being ordained in my own career. Eventually I found a job in downtown Chicago at Thorek Hospital, which had come under Adventist ownership.

Further Steps

While working in Chicago, I was ordained an elder at the West Central Adventist Church, the first woman so ordained there. My date book for Jan. 3, 1987, says, "West Central - 1st time to help with communion" as an ordained elder.

I passed my certification for chaplaincy, became an active member of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, and would later serve as its first woman president. Yet in my daily ministry, someone would occasionally ask me if I was a "real minister." Lacking ordination sometimes distracted from my ability to minister.

When I became aware of how little contact many of my sister Adventist chaplains and pastors had with information on women in ministry, I began a homemade *Newsletter for Adventist Women in*

Ministry. I would solicit personal stories of Adventist women in ministry or, when I could receive permission, copy and distribute articles on the topic.

After four years (1984-1988) at Thorek Hospital, I joined the chaplaincy staff at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Rockville, Maryland.

In 1990 great hope swelled among those Adventists who saw value and justice in ordaining women as well as men. We felt that the denomination's policy about ordination of women would soon change.

At the General Conference Session in Indiana that year, delegates agreed that where it was approved, women who were elders could perform marriages and conduct baptisms. But ordination itself was still denied.

At the 1995 General Conference Session in Utrecht, Netherlands, a motion was made to allow pastoral ordination for women in every world division where the practice was accepted. It pained me to hear my Adventist brothers from around the world speak strongly and sometimes angrily against ordaining women. The motion failed.

I wanted to belong to a church—my church, the Adventist Church—that affirmed the ministry of men and women equally. Belonging to an inclusive church was more important to me than being ordained.

Adventist chaplains in the 1990s had voted their support for ordination of women in ministry. One year when I was president of the chaplain's organization, the group tasked me with delivering an appeal for ordination of women to the General Conference president. My head chaplain, a man, went with me to the president's office, where my colleague (who didn't have a doctorate) was called "Doctor," and I, who had a doctorate, was largely ignored.

The Sligo Ordination

After the General Conference Session held in Utrecht in 1995, Sligo Church sought to go ahead with an ordination of women representing three phases of ministry: church pastor, college theology professor/pastor, and hospital chaplain—namely, Norma Osborn, Kendra Haloviak, and me. All of us were members at Sligo.

For most male clergy, ordination is expected and a time of celebration. But for women to consider ordination—even if in recognition of gifts and

experience and calling—meant to be thrust into a spotlight, to be seen as participating in a political act. I was torn. Of course, I sympathized with the feeling of being held hostage to an exclusionary policy. However, I agonized over being a part of something that seemed so right but that could be seen as rebellious. Could the notoriety cost me my place of ministry? Would articles I wrote for church publications no longer be accepted?

Though I didn't know if I could find the strength to participate, I finally decided that it would not be right to refuse, and so, I agreed. Then Sligo's letter, asking the Potomac Conference to approve the three women for ordination, did not receive a positive response. On Aug. 27, 1995, the Potomac Conference declined (11 to 8) to participate in the ceremony or to recommend the candidates to the Columbia Union Conference for ordination credentials.²

Before being approved, we three met separately with peers and ministers to review our qualifications. I appreciated the presence of a senior chaplain leader who came to speak on my behalf. Afterward I asked him if he would be attending the ordination service. He replied: "Well, I don't know. We have some company this weekend..." I assured him I understood. I wondered (assuming he were to show up) if he'd wear a baseball cap and sunglasses and sit in the back row!

He wasn't the only male pastor or leader, I think, who supported ordination for women but felt caught. Their own ministry might be tarnished, so they would rather let down others by not attending. Some found reasons to be out of town.

The Sligo Ordination Service

Although many Adventists were opposed to what was happening, we were thrilled at the attendance, as well as the congratulations of those from around the country who supported us. A group of supportive Adventist women raised money to fly other Adventist women in ministry to Sligo for the event. Pastor Rudy Torres' ordination sermon elicited a standing ovation.

My colleague who had expressed his uncertainty did attend. He came to the platform for the dedication prayer when hands were laid on us. I remember seeing tears rolling down the face of Ron Wisbey, former Columbia Union Conference president, who

was obviously supportive but who felt he had to stay in his pew.

It was a joyous time, full of love and hope, and, I believe, the Holy Spirit. For those who had experienced inner turmoil, as I had, it was also exhausting. We gathered again that evening for sharing and refreshments. People couldn't stop talking, and it went on for four hours until—as some said—Eutychus fell out of the window (Acts 20:9).

Surprising Support

Later *The Washington Post* interviewed the three of us.³ The conservative *Washington Times* gave a more critical review. A magazine called *Working Women* included our names in an issue called “Women Who Changed the World.” That was perhaps an overstatement, but the Sligo ordination was followed by similar ordinations (of Madelynn Haldeman, Hallie Wilson, and Sheryll Prinz-McMillan) in California later that year.

When the Gaithersburg Clergy Association later invited me to attend the ordination of a fellow minister, I met the Reverend Jane Holmes Dixon, suffragan bishop of the Episcopal Church in the Washington, D.C., area. She invited me to visit her.

Her office was behind a red door in the beautiful and imposing National Cathedral. She was welcoming, understanding, affirming, and encouraging. Her ordination as suffragan bishop, she said, had been especially difficult because of the opposition of one conservative priest and his congregation. Her archbishop, supportive of her ordained ministry, sent her to preach at that very church!

Her obituary in *The Washington Post* would tell of her preaching on the church basketball court, because a church would not allow her into the sanctuary.

The Hospital Board and Columbia Union Conference

Not long after my ordination, I was scheduled to give the devotional for the Shady Grove Adventist Hospital board. This was a high-powered, somewhat intimidating group. Afterward I was making my way quietly out of the room when Chairman of the Board Ron Wisbey said, “Just a minute, Penny.” He explained to the group that I had recently been ordained.

One doctor spoke up loudly: “This situation needs to be addressed!”

“Here it comes,” I thought, and my concerns about losing my job immediately reactivated. The doctor continued, “I think we need to take a vote acknowledging this event and confirming our support.” The minutes show it as a recorded vote.

After Kendra had returned to graduate school, Norma and I were invited to the Columbia Union Conference office. There two colleagues spoke of our ministries and of the Sligo ordination. We were invited to kneel while administrators and ministers, secretaries and visitors placed their hands on us and prayed for us.

Supportive and derogatory comments regarding the Sligo ordination, recorded in many publications, emails, and articles throughout the following decades, can be found still echoing today.

Although our ordinations weren't officially recognized at the time by anyone except our local congregations, for three women in the Columbia Union and three women in the Pacific Union, they were the beginning of productive ministries and expanded awareness of the need to advance more women into ministry. I believe these historic ordinations led the church to hire more Adventist women ministers as the years passed, and I'm happy to have been part of that movement. **AT**

¹ Beverly Beem and Ginger Hanks Harwood, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Spring 2005), pp. 41-58; Harwood and Beem, “It Was Mary That First Preached a Risen Jesus,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2 (Autumn 2007), pp. 221-245; Harwood and Beem, “Not a Hand Bound; Not a Voice Hushed,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, vol. 52, no. 2 (Autumn 2014), pp. 235-273.

² “Sligo Makes Historic Decision for Adventist Women in Ministry,” *The Adventist Woman*, vol. 14, no. 5 (October 1995), p. 1.

³ Debbi Wilgoren, “Three Women's Act of Devotion and Defiance,” *The Washington Post* (Nov. 4, 1995). Note that although “Defiance” was an eye-catching word in the headline, it didn't reflect our attitudes.

2 SAMUEL 11

IT WASN'T BATHSHEBA'S FAULT!

By Eric E. Richter

I VIVIDLY REMEMBER A CONVERSATION with a schoolmate who belonged to the Catholic Church. All of her life she had believed that Sunday was the Lord's day. It was a real surprise for her to realize that the Bible specifies the seventh day as the Sabbath and the day of rest.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we have placed great importance on studying the Bible to rid ourselves of traditional interpretations that lack scriptural foundation. However, should we stop at the observance of Sunday, the immortality of the soul, and the idea of eternal hell—to name a few examples—or should we continue our study to include other biblical passages that have been obscured by human traditions?

One passage that has long been misunderstood is the story of David and Bathsheba. A popular Latin-American writer describes their relationship as follows:

“Bathsheba seems a bit ‘sloppy’ taking a nude bath in a place where she knew she might be watched, especially from the royal palace. Was she doing it intentionally? ... Even though he knew that Bathsheba was married to a man who was risking his life for the king's causes, David had her brought. They both exchanged glances. Their hearts were pounding. Only the first contact was enough to unleash the passion that burned in the couple. The honeys of passion seemed to renew the king's life.”¹

In these words, one gets the impression that Bathsheba was seeking to attract the king's attention and incite him to fall into adultery. She is often portrayed as a

“seductress” who seeks to ensnare the king and become queen, despite being married to another man. However, the biblical narrative clearly shows that this is not the case. As we will see below, Bathsheba was not a willing accomplice, but rather, a victim.

Seven distinctive clues show that Bathsheba was the victim of rape and not a co-conspirator in adultery.

1. David is described negatively.

In the story of 2 Samuel 11, the narrator intentionally mentions certain details so that we subtly form a mental image of each historical figure. The chapter begins by saying that at “the time when kings go forth to battle, ... *David remained at Jerusalem*” (verse 1, emphasis mine).²

The narrator shows us that at that time of the year (in spring, when

Bathsheba is often portrayed as a “seductress” who seeks to ensnare the king and become queen, despite being married to another man.

there was no rain and when mud did not impede the march of armies), kings would typically start their military campaigns. However, David did not fulfill his role as military leader. Instead, he sent one of his generals to command his troops, while he stayed in the capital resting. Therefore, the narrative begins by showing David in a negative light.

2. The palace occupied the city’s highest point.

It is important to note that David saw Bathsheba from the roof of his palace (verse 2). David’s palace was adjacent to the designated site for the construction of Solomon’s Temple, north of the ancient city of Jerusalem. This was the highest point in the entire city, from which you could see

all other buildings that were in the Kidron Valley.³ Based on observations made during multiple trips to Jerusalem, Professor Richard Davidson noted that “one can still stand on [the remains of David’s palace] ... and have a clear view into the courtyards of the houses” that currently exist there.⁴

The biblical text itself reveals the palace to be situated on a high place. Uriah was commanded to “Go down to your house” (verse 8), but he did not comply. In four other instances, the narrative said that Uriah did not “go down” to his house (verses 9-10, 13), thereby emphasizing the elevated location of the palace.

An important detail in this story is that houses in ancient Israel had four rooms and a roofless inner courtyard. Therefore, a person at a higher elevation could observe what was happening inside. All of this information shows us that Bathsheba was not parading herself before the king in an attempt to seduce him. She was bathing inside her home, unaware that King David was watching her from the height of his palace.

3. Bathsheba was performing a ritual bath.

Also of significance is the time when all of this happened. David saw Bathsheba “one evening” (verse 2, NKJV), the time of day when ritual baths were performed. According

to the Mosaic laws, a woman who had undergone her menstrual period remained impure for seven days, after which she had to purify herself by a ritual bath performed by evening (Lev. 15:27).⁵ These details show us that Bathsheba was not taking a bath with the intention of seducing the king, but rather, was fulfilling her religious duty.

Besides, David's walk is described as an incidental act, not as part of a routine. This implies that Bathsheba would have had no way of knowing that David would be watching her. The king, however, was not unaware that ritual baths were done at sunset. Thus, we find the king invading the privacy of his subjects, spying on them at a time when he knew that some might bathe.

4. The king summoned Bathsheba to his palace.

Although the Hebrew text does not explicitly state that the king abused Bathsheba by using violent force on her, it does describe what is known as sexual assault. This crime is characterized by an unequal power relationship between an aggressor and a victim that prevents the victim from stopping unwanted sexual contact. Such an abuse of power occurs any time that words and actions of a sexual nature are imposed against another person's will.

Let us remember that as king, David was not only the most powerful person in the entire nation, but also a skilled warrior. He had political and social power to intimidate his victim, and he was also physically capable of harming her.

The Bible tells us that David "took her" and "lay with her" (verse 4). At all times it is the king who took the initiative and used his royal mandate

Although the Hebrew text does not explicitly state that the king abused Bathsheba by using violent force on her, it does describe what is known as sexual assault.

to summon his unsuspecting, loyal subject. While the narration shows David as an active character, Bathsheba is described as a passive character, indicating her lack of consent. Old Testament scholar Anthony F. Campbell asserts that "fidelity to the text suggests that the accusation should be rape."⁶

5. Uriah and Bathsheba are shown as faithful.

It is interesting that throughout the narrative, a common element between Bathsheba and Uriah emphasizes the innocence of both. When David found out that Bathsheba was pregnant, he ordered her husband to return to Jerusalem with the excuse of wanting a firsthand report of the military conflict and the state of the troops. David's real goal was to convince Uriah to sleep with his wife, which would allow him to affirm that the pregnancy was the result of the marital union and not of his abuse against Bathsheba. However, Uriah refused to leave the palace and go to be with his wife. One would expect that a man who had been away from his wife for months would be eager to see her.

However, David's plan failed because Israelite soldiers did not have sexual relations while fighting a war (1 Sam. 21:4-5). Soldiers were expected to purify and sanctify themselves during military campaigns so that they could count on divine help (Josh. 3:5). Part of the sanctification process included sexual abstinence for a certain time (Ex. 19:14-15). Uriah showed fidelity to this vow of military consecration, just as Bathsheba showed fidelity in carrying out the purification rituals

(2 Sam. 11:2, 4). This similarity between the two is not coincidental. The narrator wishes to show that the husband and wife were faithful in their worship of the true God and blameless for the king's sins.

6. The Bible puts the blame on David.

It is particularly significant that *nowhere* does the Bible blame Bathsheba for what happened. Not even part of the blame is placed on her. Scripture blames only David. In fact, when the prophet Nathan met David to deliver a message of divine punishment for this sin, in Hebrew he used singular terms instead of plural: "your [David's] sin" (2 Sam. 12:13).

In addition to this, when the prophet Nathan confronted David, he used an illustration that emphasized Bathsheba's innocence. He described her as a "little ewe lamb" (2 Sam. 12:3). A lamb is the same metaphor that the Bible uses for Christ (John 1:29). This is a virtually universal symbol of purity and innocence. If Bathsheba were complicit in adultery, why would the Bible describe her using a symbol of innocence?

7. Ellen White places the blame on David.

Like the Bible, Ellen G. White never blames Bathsheba for what happened, nor does she place even part of the blame on her. Instead, she describes

David as guilty of sinning against Uriah and also against Bathsheba: "As time passed on, David's sin toward Bathsheba became known, and suspicion was excited that he had planned the death of Uriah. [...] David had committed a grievous sin, toward both Uriah and Bathsheba, and he keenly felt this. But infinitely greater was his sin against God."⁷

White also remarked on later consequences of the king's actions, which surfaced during the rebellion of his son Absalom. She wrote: "Again David was forced to recognize in his calamities the results of his own sin. The defection of Ahithophel, the ablest and most wily of political leaders, was prompted by revenge for the family disgrace involved in the wrong to Bathsheba, who was his granddaughter."⁸

Abuse of Power

As we have seen, Scripture calls us to change our interpretation of the widely read story of David and Bathsheba. This is not the story of an adulterous affair, but a sad account of sexual abuse from a powerful figure. The young woman was not a "seductress," but the innocent victim of King David's lust.

¹ Alejandro Medina Villareal, *¡Renúevate! lecturas devocionales para jóvenes* (2017), p. 45, translated by the author.

² Scripture quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

³ Eilat Mazar, "Did I Find David's Palace?" *Biblical Archaeology Society* (January/February 2006).

⁴ Richard Davidson, "Did King David Rape Bathsheba? A Case Study in Narrative Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2006), p. 83.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 84.

⁶ Anthony F. Campbell, *2 Samuel*, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature series, vol. 7 (2005), p. 104.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890), pp. 720, 722.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 735.



NEWS BRIEFS

BarelyAdventist (barelyadventist.com) is a satire and humor blog on Adventist culture and issues. It is written by committed Adventists who don't mind laughing at our idiosyncrasies.

Introverts Request Greeter-Free Entrance

ADVENTIST WORLD – Hot-breath “Happy Sabbaths” and COVID-transmitting handshakes are turning off introverts who just want to be left alone when they come to church on Sabbath morning.

After a record number of complaints from members who do not want a post-COVID return to the status quo of overly enthusiastic Sabbath greetings, the denomination is introducing introvert-friendly side entrances to churches, from which greeters are banned.

These entrances will lead straight into comfortable introvert-only sanctuary seating, bypassing the lobby and its hordes of chatty deacons with nothing better to do than quiz you on the details of your life you'd rather not share.

Introvert seating allows pew occupants to completely ignore worship leaders who enthusiastically order worshipers to “turn to your left and tell your neighbor what you had for breakfast.”

Of the introverts surveyed before publication time, most approved of the new provisions, although some pointed out that no measures have been taken yet to shield introverts from loudmouths in potluck lines.

Ted Wilson Changes GC Session Theme Song

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — In remarks made immediately following news of his re-election to a third term as General Conference (GC) president, Ted Wilson changed the 2022 GC Session theme song from “There Is a Place of Quiet Rest” to “I Shall Not Be Moved.”

Wilson explained that the replacement hymn far more effectively spoke to the “miracle of the GC Session,” telling fellow incumbent leaders that “retirement isn't a thing” and that the denomination would continue to “reject term limits and pineapple in haystacks” for as long as he was in charge.

In other news, an official motion to designate June 6 as the “second Great Disappointment” was defeated when it became evident that only a quarter of the delegates were in favor of the calendar addition.

British Pastor Suing to Get Sabbaths Off

WATFORD, England — A stressed-out, nearly ordained pastor has filed a religious discrimination lawsuit against the British Union Conference (BUC) of Seventh-day Adventists. The Adventist minister claims the BUC is forcing him to work on Sabbath against his firmly held religious beliefs.

Pastor Mel Lenyal alleges that despite explaining to BUC leadership that the 10 Commandments clearly forbid his working on Sabbath, he's been “forced to preach most Saturdays and smile at even the most annoying church members every week for years.”

Lenyal claims he stands a better chance of getting Sabbaths off if he worked at his local supermarket or even his local Catholic food bank.

Uber Isn't Viable End-Time Escape Plan

SILVER SPRING, Md. — The General Conference leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has warned members not to plan on booking an Uber to escape to the wilderness in the Time of Trouble.

“Not only will ridiculous Time of Trouble surge pricing be in effect during this perilous time in Earth’s history, but the Bible clearly states that you aren’t going to be able to buy or sell, so Uber rides are simply out of the question,” said a statement from the Department of End-Time Doomsscrolling.

“The solution isn’t simply to switch to Lyft or offer cash,” the statement added. “There just isn’t a ride-share solution for fleeing to the wilderness. Our best advice is to try to make sure you are in Silver Spring when things go south. If you need to hitch a ride, ADRA trucks will be departing every 15 minutes from the front entrance of our world headquarters.”

Committee Meeting Sets Guinness Record

BERKSHIRE, England — A Newbold Church committee meeting (still in session) has just set a Guinness World Record for the longest meeting on record.

The committee was originally called to discuss a working bee, but reports from exasperated committee members indicate that a small group of overly chatty individuals then hijacked the meeting with war stories of decades-old Sabbath flower arrangements gone wrong and unrelated church gossip that absolutely nobody else cares about.

Despite the best efforts of church staff to regain control of the agenda, the verbose and long-since-retired committee members are droning on and on.

“We’ve even warned that the second coming could come before the end of their stories, but all we heard back was a warning that we should avoid ‘date setting,’” whispered church newsletter editor Joe Escribo on Facebook Live, pleading for help from anyone still awake at 2:44 a.m.

Potluck Failures Add to Deep-Seated Shame

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich. — According to the Andrews University Dietetics Department, the greatest source of shame in the Adventist experience is the prospect of leaving a potluck with your food untouched and untasted.

“The shame felt at this experience translates globally, with Adventists everywhere

reporting anxiety if they even *think* about their potluck creation being ignored,” said the university dietetics professor, Big Frank.

“Our church kitchens receive weekly donations of baking trays and pans because members would rather leave their dishes behind than own up to the fact that their tofu dish was passed over by the entire congregation,” said Frank.



Mora continued from page 15

until 1934.³⁵ Having demonstrated her ability to lead and strengthen Adventist work, she held the same position in the Guatemala Mission from 1935 to 1939, even after Adolf died suddenly in 1938.³⁶

In 1940, she is listed in the Yearbook as Marie Fanselau, executive secretary and treasurer of the Guatemala Mission. While World War II was raging in Europe, progress of the Adventist work in Guatemala was recognized in the report of “Mrs. Marie Fanselau.”³⁷ During 1944, she became the mission’s interim president after Werner A. Wild was called away to serve as editor for *El Centinela*, in Panama.³⁸

In 1945, Pastor C. E. Westphal affirmed Marie’s extensive work: “Mrs. Fanselau, our Mission secretary-treasurer and [departmental] secretary for Publications and Home, devotes much of her time to attending to the needs of our twelve colporteurs.”³⁹ In 1946, the General Conference voted to send Marie to the United States with her children. She received credentials as a missionary until her death in 1999.

Conclusion

Women were a determining factor in the organization of the first missions and associations in the Inter-American Division. They maintained the stability and governance of the churches, together with the men. In addition, they safeguarded the financial funds and reported the challenges and progress in their local fields. While they did not exercise the offices of an ordained pastor, these women served as duly elected and recognized top officers of the Adventist organization. 

¹ William A. Spicer, “The Secretary’s Report,” *General Conference Bulletin*, vol. 6, no. 1 (May 14, 1909), p. 12.

² George Enoch, *The Advent Message in the Sunny Caribbean* (1907).

³ M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (1926), pp. 537-557.

⁴ See Wesley Amundsen, *The Advent Message in Inter-America* (1947); Floyd Greenleaf, *The History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America and the Caribbean*, vols. 1 and 2 (1992); Richard A. James, ed., *A Stone of Help: Presidential Reports of the Guyana Conference of SDA* (2015); Eric John Murray, *A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891-1981* (1981); Luis E. Greenidge, *Beginnings and Developments of Seventh-day Adventist Work in Venezuela*, (1935); Glen O. Phillips, *Over a Century of Adventism 1884-1991* (1991).

⁵ Nataniel García Robayana, *Sin Temor al Futuro* (1989); Carlos Schupnik, *Aquí Obró Dios* (2010).

⁶ Patrick Allen, “The Depression and the Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” *Adventist Heritage*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Fall 1986), pp. 48-54; Laura L. Vance, *Seventh-day Adventism in Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion* (1999).

⁷ Barry Oliver, “Denominational Organization, 1860-1863,” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* (2020).

⁸ “News and Notes,” *The Life Boat*, vol. 7, no. 2 (February 1904), p. 61.

⁹ “Isaiah E. Moore – 8155,” U.S., Consular Registration Certificates, 1907-1918.

¹⁰ *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1906*, p. 87.

¹¹ Francisco H. Westphal, *Pionero en Sudamérica*, translated by Silvia Scholtus de Roscher (1997), pp. 31-32, 34.

¹² Eugenio Di Dionisio, “Nowlen, Clair A. (1865-1961),” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* (2020).

¹³ “Spanish Central America,” *One Hundred and Sixty-Third Meeting of General Conference Committee* (April 5, 1907), p. 270.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁵ “Business Notices,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 85, no. 10 (March 15, 1908), p. 24.

¹⁶ “Year-Book Revision,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 85, no. 22 (May 28, 1908), p. 22.

¹⁷ Ethel Nowlen, “Obituaries/Nowlen,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 85, no. 21 (May 21, 1908), p. 23.

¹⁸ “One of the Little Ones,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 85, no. 18 (Apr. 30, 1908), p. 24.

¹⁹ Ethel Nowlen, “Guatemala,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 85, no. 28 (July 9, 1908), p. 19.

²⁰ *Three Hundred and Twenty-Seventh Session, 7th Meeting of General Conference Committee* (Dec. 10, 1908), p. 575.

²¹ E. L. Cardey, “Guatemala, Central America,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 86, no. 6 (Feb. 11, 1909), p. 15; “Items of Interest/Southern Illinois,” *Lake Union Herald*, vol. 1, no. 12 (Jan. 20, 1909), p. 8.

²² William A. Spicer, “A Fallen Worker,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 86, no. 2 (Jan. 14, 1909), p. 6.

²³ *One Hundred Ninth Meeting of General Conference Committee* (Jan. 28, 1915), p. 255.

²⁴ *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1916*, p. 166; *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1919*, p. 189.

²⁵ *One Hundred Sixtieth Meeting of General Conference Committee* (July 30, 1923), p. 409.

²⁶ William A. Spicer, “Seen and Heard in Porto Rico,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 95, no. 5 (Jan. 31, 1918), p. 17; William Steele, “Porto Rico,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 95, no. 48 (Nov. 28, 1918), p. 18.

²⁷ Nathaniel Garcia, *Sin Temor al Futuro* (1989), p. 9.

²⁸ *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1926*, p. 216; Pedro L. V. Welch, “East Caribbean Conference,” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* (1970).

²⁹ “In Attendance at the Division Council,” *Inter-American Division Messenger*, vol. 2, no. 8 (August 1925), p. 1.

³⁰ Ian Greene and Clive P. Dottin, “Caribbean Union Conference,” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* (2020); Inter-American Division, *Committee Minutes* (May 18, 1926), p. 117.

³¹ *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1932*, p. 179; *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1935*, p. 139.

³² *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1937*, p. 143; C. P. Crager, “Changes and Recruits,” *Inter-American Division Messenger*, vol. 15, no. 6 (March 15, 1938), p. 5.

³³ *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1940*, pp. 151, 153.

³⁴ *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1942*, p. 115.

³⁵ *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1934*, p. 136.

³⁶ *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists – 1939*, p. 149.

³⁷ Wesley Amundsen, “Advance in Guatemala,” *Review and Herald*, vol. 120, no. 42 (Oct. 21, 1943), p. 12.

³⁸ *Three Hundred Fourth Meeting of General Conference Committee* (July 22, 1943), p. 1020.

³⁹ C. E. Westphal, “Notes of Progress from Field Reports,” *Inter-American Division Messenger*, vol. 22, no. 1 (January 1945), p. 8.

Contributors



KUMAR DIXIT, D.Min., is palliative medicine administrator for Montgomery Hospice in Rockville, Maryland, and an adjunct professor

at Washington Adventist University. He has authored many articles and published the book *Branded Faith: Contextualizing the Gospel in a Post-Christian World*.



STEPHEN FERGUSON is a lawyer from Perth, Western Australia, with expertise in planning, environment, immigration, and

administrative-government law. He is married to Amy and has two children, William and Eloise.



DANIEL A. MORA is from Venezuela. He is an editor and writer trained in theology who writes about issues such as feminism, immigration,

racism, and social justice.



LINDSEY ABSTON PAINTER is a mental health trainer living in Northern California. She is passionate about feminism, social justice,

and sci-fi. She is a proud parent and has way too many cats and one goofy dog.



ERIC E. RICHTER, B.Th., is coordinator of the Adventist Heritage Center at River Plate Adventist University in Argentina. He has

published several scholarly papers and specializes in New Testament studies and Adventist history.



PENNY SHELL retired to the Northwest in 2006 to be near friends, and she has enjoyed membership in the Walla Walla University Church in

Washington ever since.



JIM WIBBERDING, D.Min., is the professor of applied theology and biblical studies at Pacific Union College in California.



EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the editorial board. One of the purposes of this magazine is to encourage dialogue between those of differing viewpoints within the Adventist Church. Thus, we will publish articles ranging throughout the conservative-liberal continuum.

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Just thinking about this summer's General Conference Session makes me more grateful than ever for *Adventist Today*.

As many of the same leaders were re-elected and the powers that be seemed to do their level best to narrow the parameters of what it means to be Adventist, I struggled to feel hopeful. As I followed the votes and pronouncements of the session, I found it hard to see the intellectual and spiritual rigor that animated our Adventist pioneers. Instead of a focus on Present Truth, denominational leaders seemed determined

to defend tradition, preserve institutions, and stifle debate.

I love *Adventist Today*, because it provides a platform where we can offer a counterweight to that type of behavior. We exist for such a time as this. We are determined to promote discussion and growth within the church we love. We are here, doing the work, because we love this faith community and are committed to helping it be the best it can possibly be.

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