



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

General Conference
World Headquarters



Department of Women's Ministries

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Dear Women's Ministries Leaders:

We are privileged to be women living in momentous times. We are much closer to the Second Coming and the service of women is so much needed. Joel and Peter wrote

that in the last days God will
pour out his Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.
—Acts 2:17, 18.

It is obvious that we are living in a changing world. Even the church family cannot escape the scars of stressful last-day pressures. Brokenness in families and the stress-filled lives of the people around us is beyond doubt. Families are scattered and women lack the role models and mentoring they once enjoyed. They are torn by professional needs and ambitions; the home, husband and children; and the demands of the church and community. The church must remain relevant in order to meet the needs of these people.

Almost entirely unique to women are six challenge issues that Women's Ministries has chosen to address around the world; these issues affect women in all cultures, in and out of the church. Fortunately, as we meet these needs for the women in the church, these issues can also be a basis for outreach to our sisters in the community and nation. These issues are abuse, poverty, health risks, work loads and conditions, literacy, and the lack of training and mentoring. In this handbook you will find suggestions and ideas for meeting these needs.

But there is something unique too about Women's Ministries itself—it is not a neat package of programs for you to repeat. It is a program of helping each woman find, understand, and use her special gifts, and then to reach out to meet the needs of those around her. Hence, the programs will look and function differently in different churches, countries, cultures. Each Women's Ministries program must be shaped to fit the needs of the women it serves. This handbook will give you resources to accomplish this mission and this ministry.

May God richly bless you as you serve Him, as you find your talents and gifts, and as you make a difference for eternity.

In His love,

Ardis Stenbakken
Director



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Dear Sisters in Christ:

When a renewal of Women's Ministries was conceived in the 1980's, it was hoped and dreamed that women could make an even greater difference in the Seventh-day Adventist Church--that women would be more involved in the direction and leadership as well as in the mission of the church. That dream has been coming true. In the 1990's women have shown not only what they can do for other women, but that they can make a difference to the overall success of the church as well.

As Ellen G White wrote over a century ago:

Christian women are called for. There is a wide field in which they may do good service for the Master. There are noble women who have had moral courage to decide in favor of the truth from the weight of evidence. They have tact, perception, and good ability, and could make successful Christian workers. There is work neglected or done imperfectly that could be thoroughly accomplished through the help that they are able to give. They could reach a class that ministers cannot reach. There are offices in the church that they could fill acceptably, and many branches of the church work that they could attend to if properly instructed. —*Signs of the Times*, Sept 6, 1886.

As we look at the needs around us, we can easily see that the talents and ministries of all our members are necessary—men, women, old and young. We face an amazing array of obstacles and opportunities, and it will take each of us, working together, to meet these needs in the most effective ways. Women can help meet the needs of women in their communities. Included in this challenge is the need to witness to the 900 million Muslims, the millions of Hindus, the 350-400 million Buddhists, and the millions of others in First World countries who are longing to know that someone cares. For many of these groups, only women can and are making a difference.

May the Lord bless you as you take up your particular mission, as you seek God to lead you, as you seek the counsel of your church, and as you set out to make a difference for the Kingdom of God.

Sincerely,

Jan Paulsen
President