

**Ellen White and the Australasian Ministers, 1893 to 1901:
An Analysis of the Documents**

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Introduction

Social action indwells the evangel because the God who *promises the news of the gospel* is the God at work *transforming the world*, inviting all adherents of the gospel to share in the transformational work. Thus, when it is confessed that God is *the subject of the evangel* and God is *the agent of social action*, no division between the two is thinkable.

Walter Brueggemann, *Deep Memory Exuberant Hope*, p 33, emphasis in original

The human agents are to be laborers together with God, doing the same kind of work that he came into our world to do. As long as it is in our power to help the needy and oppressed, we must do this for the human beings whom Christ shed his own blood to save from ruin.... We cannot with our wills sway back the wave of poverty which is sweeping over this country [Australia]; but just as far as the Lord shall provide us with means, we shall break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free [Isa 58:6].

Ellen White to H W Kellogg, Oct 24, 1894
and J H Kellogg, Oct 25, 1894

From light which the Lord has graciously given to mother, and which she has written out for the instruction of the Managers of the B.C. Sanitarium, and the leading men at the General Conference, I learn that the Lord has chosen to use Australia, as field [sic] in which to work out an object lesson for the benefit of his church, the world, and all, and in which to demonstrate the power of the Gospel presented in the spirit and manner of his counsels.

W C White to John Wessels, Mar 28, 1899

Until Ellen White wrote in the *Review* in 1895 that women who participated in ministry “should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands,” Seventh-day Adventists had only three categories that allowed for ordination: pastor-evangelists, local church elders, local church deacons. Sources indicate that no Seventh-day woman had been ordained to any of those

categories prior to the Ellen White statement.¹ This paper probes the possibilities that Ellen White is suggesting an entirely new concept of Seventh-day Adventist ministry to which Seventh-day Adventist women should be ordained. Here's her statement in a fuller context in the July 9, 1895, *Review* article:

Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church. We need to branch out more in our methods of labor. Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, *privately* or *publicly*, to help forward this grand work.²

This paper attempts to probe the fullest context of Mrs White's statement to include the Australasian understanding of ministry guided by Ellen White during the period 1893 to 1901. This reviewer believes that the context reveals full-fledged ordination of Seventh-day Adventist women to the most dynamic and progressive ministry fostered by Seventh-day Adventists to that time.

Crucial to addressing this issue is the realization that at the time it was made, 19th century Seventh-day Adventist understanding of ministry precluded the local church pastorate. No Seventh-day Adventist church during this period retained what would be called a stationary pastor who had jurisdiction over a local church. General Conference President O A Olsen reaffirmed this to the Australasian Union Conference at its first session in February 1894: "A minister should not be located with a church."³ Thus when the term "the minister" is used, it means a minister under the jurisdiction of the conference or union conference who ministers through that conference or union conference.

The Ellen White Review Articles

Between June and December 1895, Ellen White printed articles in the *Review* every

¹ See W H Littlejohn, "The Duties of Local Church Officers," RH, Nov 22, 1887, p 730; *SDA Encyclopedia*, 1976, article "Ordination;" and 1986 edition of *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, "THE DEACONESS... Women served in the early church as deaconesses. There is no record, however, that these women were ordained; hence the practice of ordaining deaconesses is not followed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

² Ellen White, "The Duty of the Minister and the People," RH, July 9, 1895, p 434, emphasis supplied.

³ O A Olsen, Address to Australian Union Conference Meeting, Feb 18, 1894, p 10.

week, almost all of which discussed an emerging concept of ministry designed specifically to impact the large cities of both North America and around the world. Ellen White was especially focused upon defining that ministry that began to pervade the Seventh-day Adventist Church beginning at the 1893 General Conference Session and within Australia and New Zealand by 1894. In her 1895 articles ⁴ Mrs White addressed the impoverished conditions within Australia and the inadequate working force to evangelize the cities: “The Lord’s vineyard is a more extensive one than the present working force is able properly to cultivate.” She bemoaned that ministers were too preoccupied with “sermonizing” to local churches and “those who know the truth, instead of being used to enlighten the ignorant.” “Every agency is to be set in operation, not to work for the churches, but to work for those who are in the darkness of error.”⁵ Mrs White publicly informed the membership of her intentions as she focused upon Luke 14:23:

There has been so much preaching to our churches, that they have almost ceased to appreciate the gospel ministry. The time has come when this order of things should be changed....It is by engaging in earnest work, by hard, painful experience, that we are enabled to reach the men and the women of our cities, to call them in from the highways and the byways of life....O, it makes me so sad to see that so little is being done in our cities.⁶

Gospel ministry is defined by Ellen White as reaching the “poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,” as emphasized in Luke 14. In her July 9 article, Mrs White stressed the nature of the ministry practiced by Christ: “Should not all have an opportunity to learn of Christ’s methods by practical experience? Why not put them to work visiting the sick and assisting in other ways.”⁷

The Articles and the Texts

In her urging of a new concept of ministry that would impact the cities, Mrs White stressed a number of biblical texts that would be regularly used by herself and those fostering the new focus upon ministry. Indeed, a major two-part article followed one month after her call for ordaining women entitled “Draw Out Thy Soul to the Hungry,” focusing upon Isaiah 58:10.⁸ As she would consistently do during her Australasian ministry, Mrs White emphasized the ministry of Christ to the poor and needy. Quoting Jesus, “They that be whole need not a physician, but

⁴ In many cases these articles seem to have been compiled from testimonies or letters Ellen White had previously written to church leaders or individuals.

⁵ Ellen White, “Even So Send I You,” RH, June 25, 1895, pp 401-02.

⁶ Ellen White, “Go Ye Into All the World,” RH June 11, 1895, pp 369-70.

⁷ Ellen White, “The Duty of the Minister and the People,” RH July 9, 1895, p 433.

⁸ Ellen White, RH, Aug 13 and 20, 1895, pp 513-14, 529-30.

they that are sick,” she noted Jesus’ quote from Isaiah 61 at the beginning of his ministry: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”⁹ Interestingly, Mrs White emphasized those statements as a “prophecy” from Isaiah fulfilled by Christ in His day, and also to be applied to the current situation in Australasia. In urging the relevant ministry for her day, Mrs White as did Jesus proclaimed, “Brethren, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me.”¹⁰ She stressed Isaiah 58 as exemplifying the work that the ministry and laity in Australia and indeed throughout Seventh-day Adventism was called upon to do:

In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, the work that the people of God are to do in Christ’s lines, is clearly set forth. They are to break every yoke, they are to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to bring the poor that are cast out into their houses, to draw out their souls to the hungry, and to satisfy the afflicted soul. If they carry out the principles of the law of God in acts of mercy and love, they will represent the character of God to the world, and receive the richest blessings of Heaven. The Lord says, “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee [Christ our righteousness]; and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rear-ward.”¹¹

Another of the consistently used texts fostering the new ministry embraced by Seventh-day Adventists sprang from Luke 14:23: “And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” Mrs White emphasized that the messengers were to go “into the streets of the *city*.” The “compelling message” was the message of working as Christ had done in His earthly ministry.¹²

Again alluding to the experience of Jesus in Luke 14, Mrs White reflected upon the man at the table “who did not relish the plain, practical truths” that Jesus presented in reference to men’s duty toward the poor. “He did not wish to follow Christ’s instruction, and call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, to a feast, when they could not recompense him.” Mrs White drew the implications for the new ministry to be embraced by Seventh-day Adventists:

We should remember that Jesus has purchased the fallen man or woman or youth that we are tempted to despise. They may be giving themselves over to the power of Satan, and may be uniting with Satan in obliterating the moral image of God from themselves and from others, yet the Lord Jesus looks with yearning tenderness upon the debased and

⁹ Luke 4:16-21, Isa 61:1-2.

¹⁰ Ellen White, “Draw Out Thy Soul to the Hungry,” RH, Aug 13, 1895, p 513.

¹¹ *Ibid*, Aug 20, p 529, bracketed material in original.

¹² Ellen White, “The Compelling Message,” RH Sept 24, 1895, pp 609-10.

profligate....Shall those who profess to be laborers together with God look upon those who are wretched, who are bruised, robbed, and left to perish by the adversary of God and man, and pass by on the other side as did the priest and the Levite?...The Lord has left the poor to the mercy of his church, not to be neglected, not to be despised and scorned, but to be treated as the Lord's inheritance....Let us at once seek to realize what is our obligation to the Lord's human family, and do our duty to as many as possible....[Christ] has adopted the poor and the suffering as his own peculiar treasure, and has left them to the care of his church. His disciples are to be stewards of his gifts, and to use his bounties in relieving suffering humanity. They are to feed and clothe and shelter those who have need.¹³

Ellen White's Ministry to Australasia

In Australia, Ellen White saw a "new world, and a very great work to be done," and observed, "The Lord designs that there shall be a true pattern in Australia, a sample of how other fields shall be worked," and called for a "symmetrical" development of the work in that new world. Her son, William C White observed:

It has been presented to Mother that Australasia is a field in which we will do a model work, a work that will show to our friends and brethren in other lands how the evangelistic work and the medical work should be carried forward in perfect agreement, in perfect harmony, blended together.¹⁴

Early in her ministry in Australasia, Mrs White proclaimed to the believers:

Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked, for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And the effort to bless others will re-act in blessings upon ourselves....During the life of Christ, the sick and afflicted were objects of his special care. The Saviour devoted more time and labour to healing the afflicted than to preaching.¹⁵

As early as April 1894, Mrs White identified with the Christian Help ministry inaugurated by John Harvey Kellogg in the cities of America and described similar methodologies being practiced in Australasia:

¹³ Ellen White, "Character Tested by Small Occurrences," RH Oct 15, 1895, pp 657-58.

¹⁴ Ellen White to Mrs Jennie L Ings, Aug 4, 1894, I36, 1894; to J H Kellogg, Jan 6, 1899, Special Testimonies Vol 71898-99; W C White to Dr F T Lamb, Aug 23, 1899, WCW Bk 13, p 512.

¹⁵ Ellen White, *Bible Echo*, Dec 1, 1893, Jan 8, 1894, pp 384, 16.

I have a deep interest in the Home Mission work in which you are engaged. It is a great and good work to relieve suffering humanity....Brother Hickox, who is laboring there [Melbourne area] has done nobly. All alone he has pitched his tent and held meetings....He has visited, given Bible readings, and conversed and prayed with families....Brother and Sister Hickox have both had experience in missionary labor, and they will take hold of the work together...The failure of banks, the financial pressure, makes hard times everywhere in this country....We hear of people starving to death in the cities, and nearly every day persons come to our door begging for something to eat. They are never turned away.¹⁶

Again in 1894, Mrs White described the kind of public ministry that she endorsed within Australasia. She urged Elder and Mrs Corliss to embrace a ministerial team concept that would become so successful in the Corliss ministry:

Do not wind up your work in Hawthorne in a hurry. Let persons be selected to give personal labor. You can not be expected to do all that is essential in this line, and yet fill your appointments in preaching the word. I have felt a deep interest for yourself and Brother Hare that your labors shall be productive of great good. The Lord above can give the increase. I can not believe that the work is all done in Brighton and Prahan, and Hawthorne. It would be unwise to let the work stop in these places, and move to new localities, when the work has not been really bound off. Brother Hickox has done well at [Seven Hills]. He has preached much, visited, and given Bible readings. He has done a large amount of personal labor from house to house, and the Lord has blessed this kind of labor.¹⁷

Mrs White constantly alluded to the impoverished situation she observed throughout the Australian countryside, and especially within the cities: "Men are willing to do anything, and women will do what they can, washing or working in any line, but money is very, very close in this country."¹⁸ Mrs White saw a New Testament context for the ministry she was embracing for the male and female laborers in Australia and sought to correct previous Seventh-day Adventist understanding of ministry:

Too much dependence is placed upon preachers, while the house to house work is much neglected. Paul, the faithful apostle, says, "I kept back nothing that is profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." [Acts

¹⁶ Ellen White to Dr and Mrs J H Kellogg, April 18, 1894 K47-1894, pp 1-3.

¹⁷ Ellen White to Brother and Sister Corliss, May 17, 1894, pp 1, 3.

¹⁸ Ellen White to Dear Children, Sept 17, 1894 W118-1894, p 2.

20:20]....Those who are laborers together with God will ever work in Christ's lines.¹⁹

Ellen White described the Australian context to ministry to Stephen Haskell in August of 1894:

On every hand we see opportunities for using our means. Poverty and distress are everywhere. I will not see the people suffer for the want of food and clothing so long as the Lord gives me something to do with. I will dispense to the poor. Throughout New South Wales we have been tested and tried with the epidemic influenza. Nearly every family has been afflicted in the cities and country towns.²⁰

She shared with H W Kellogg her emerging understanding of a ministry to fit the Australian context:

We are sorely perplexed ourselves to understand our duty to all these suffering ones. So many families are out of employment, and that means destitute, hungry, afflicted, and oppressed. I can see no way but to help these poor souls in their great need, and I shall do this if the Lord will. And he does will. His word is sure, and cannot fail, nor be changed by any of the human devices to evade it. We must help the needy and the oppressed, lest Satan take them out of our hands, out of our ranks, and place them, while under temptation, in his own ranks.²¹

The next day she alluded to Isaiah 58 and hinted of the Seventh-day Adventist ministry that would soon pervade Australia and New Zealand: "We cannot with our wills sway back the wave of poverty which is sweeping over this country; but just as far as the Lord shall provide us with means, we shall break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free."²²

Mrs White's son William C White placed in his dairy a statement made by Ellen White at the Ashfield campmeeting the next week; "Mother read to us a message about the work we must do in the cities showing that we must work the cities & work them now."²³ Because of Mrs White's strong convictions about the kind of ministry relevant to Australia, she paid from her own funds the salaries of two workers:

¹⁹ Ellen White to S N Haskell, Sept 2, 1894, pp 2-3 H29-1894.

²⁰ Ellen White to S N Haskell, Aug 13, 1894, p 5 H30-1894.

²¹ Ellen White to H W Kellogg, Oct 24, 1894, p 6 K42-1894.

²² Ellen White to Brother Kellogg, Oct 25, 1894, p 5 K46a-1894.

²³ W C White Diary Entry, Oct 30, 1894.

The two men, Bro Collins and Bro Pallant, who are paid from my purse, have been doing visiting, getting access to families, interesting them by personal labor, and giving them Bible readings. Both are capable men, and will soon be ordained to the ministry. As much depends upon the work of visiting, talking and praying with the people, and opening the way of truth to them, as in giving discourses, and I could not let them go out of the work....*There are women of excellent ability, who, I think, should be connected with the work.* One, a worthy woman, has been a teacher on Norfolk Island....This sister, Edwards by name, is a pre-existing woman of excellent qualifications; and if I could make my purse stretch a little further, I would say, "Sister Edwards, take right hold, and visit the families you know are interested in the truth, and talk with them." *We have no women workers here now since we let Sister Walker go up to Queensland at the earnest call of Bro Starr for women workers in the homes of those who are interested hearers of the truth...* The poor, our family have had to assist in food and clothing, and to help the widow and fatherless by money gifts as well as food and clothing. This is a part of our work as Christians which cannot be neglected. Christ said, "The poor ye have always with you," and in this part of the Lord's vineyard, that it literally true. Doing good in all its forms is enjoined upon the Lord's missionaries by the Holy Scripture. Read 2 Cor 9. You see our work is not only to preach, but as we see suffering humanity in the world, we are to help them in their temporal necessities.²⁴

It is apparent that both male and female workers in Australasia were performing what Mrs White considered ministry in the fullest sense. If the conference lacked the funding she would and did pay workers to do ministry and would support female workers if her purse could be stretched farther.

"The Laborer is Worthy of His Hire"

This testimony dated March 22, 1898, clearly relates to circumstances in Australia and New Zealand and clearly is relating to women who are defined as "laborers" beyond the local church level and who, according to Mrs White should be paid from tithe funds. Indeed, this testimony alone deals with every basic issue addressed in this paper, including ordination of women. Here are some of those relevant issues:

Minister's wives are performing ministry as defined by Mrs White: "Some matters have been presented to me in regard to the laborers who are seeking to do all in their power to win souls to Jesus Christ. The ministers are paid for their work, and this is well. And if the Lord gives the wife as well as the husband the burden of labor, and if she devotes her time and her strength to visiting from family to family, opening the Scriptures to them, although the hands of ordination have not been laid upon her, she is accomplishing a work that is in the line of ministry."

²⁴ Ellen White to Brother Harper, March 7, 1895, pp 2-5 H31b-1895, emphasis supplied.

Such ministry is indicted by God, and thus in God's sight, that woman is ordained:
“Injustice has been done to women who labor just as devotedly as their husbands, and who are recognized by God as being as necessary to the work of ministry as their husbands.”

Women working beyond the local church level should be paid within the administrative structure: “The method of paying men-laborers and not their wives, is a plan not after the Lord's order. Injustice is thus done. A mistake is made. The Lord does not favor this plan. This arrangement, if carried out in our Conferences, is liable to discourage our sisters from qualifying themselves for the work they should engage in....

“Some women are now teaching young women how to work successfully as visitors and Bible readers. Women who work in the cause of God should be given wages proportionate to the time they give to the work. God is a God of justice, and if the ministers receive a salary for their work, their wives, who devote themselves just as interestedly to the work as laborers together with God, should be paid in addition to the wages their husbands receive, notwithstanding that they may not ask this. As the devoted minister and his wife engage in the work, they should be paid proportionate to the wages of two distinct workers, that they may have means to use as they shall see fit in the cause of God. The Lord has put his spirit upon them both. If the husband should die, and leave his wife, she is fitted to continue her work in the cause of God, and receive wages for the labor she performs.

“Seventh-day Adventists are not in any way to belittle woman's work. If a woman puts her housework in the hands of a faithful, prudent helper, and leaves her children in good care, while she engages in the work, the Conference should have wisdom to understand the justice of her receiving wages....

“If women do the work that is not the most agreeable to many of those who labor in word and doctrine, and if their works testify that they are accomplishing a work that has been manifestly neglected, should not such labor be looked upon as being as rich in results as the work of the ordained ministers? Should it not command the hire of the laborer? Would not such workers be defrauded if they were not paid?

“This question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it. You are to do your duty to the women who labor in the gospel, whose work testifies that they are essential to carry the truth into families. Their work is just the work that must be done. In many respects a woman can impart knowledge to her sisters that a man cannot. The cause would suffer great loss without this kind of labor. Again and again the Lord has shown me that women teachers are just as greatly needed to do the work to which he has appointed them as are men. They should not be compelled by the sentiments and rules of others to depend upon donations for their payment, any more than should the ministers.”

Ministry for women as defined in the Australasian context is gospel ministry: “There are women who should labor in the gospel ministry. In many respects they would do more good than the ministers who neglect to visit the flock of God. Husband and wife may unite in this work, and when it is possible, they should. The way is open for consecrated women.”

Isaiah 56:1-8 applied to the Australasian context: “Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye

judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed....The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.’

“This is the grand and noble work that the minister and his wife may do by qualifying themselves as faithful shepherds and guardians of the flock....

“Those women who labor to teach souls to seek for the new birth in Christ Jesus, are doing a precious work. They consecrate themselves to God, and they are just as verily laborers for God as are their husbands. They can enter families to which ministers could find no access. They can listen to the sorrows of their depressed and oppressed. They can shed rays of light into discouraged souls. They can pray with them. They can open the Scriptures, and enlighten them from a ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”

Doors should be opened for consecrated women to enter public, Conference-paid work:
“God wants workers who can carry the truth to all classes, high and low, rich and poor. In this work women may act an important part. God grant that those who read these words may put forth earnest efforts to present an open door for consecrated women to enter the field.” (Ellen White to J H Kellogg, C H Jones, G A Irwin, Mrs Baker, March 22, 1898 (“The Laborer is Worthy of His Hire,” Ms 43a-1898).

That which Ellen White sought for the Australasian *field*, she likewise sought for the local churches:

In the newly made churches converted men are to be appointed as officers. Humble workers, both men and women, are to take hold of the work. There is a deep-seated necessity for work in every line. There are to be no ornamental, adorning spirits in the church. Appoint wise men and women to minister in word and deed in the new churches.²⁵

About five years after Mrs White’s 1895 statement about women to be ordained for Australasian ministry, she made an elaboration that helps explain her intent:

After the camp-meeting the work should be continued. A number of *workers* should remain, and a suitable place should be provided for a mission home. Consecrated women should engage in Bible work from house to house. Thus they come close to the people. Finding the sick, they pray with them, and do what they can for their relief from suffering. Thus an interest is awakened, and hearts are won. The work is not left in uncertainty. The workers do not follow impulse. Their work is to arouse the churches to do their duty as Christians. Thus the ensign of truth is to be uplifted. In every place where no suitable building can be secured, a church should be erected. And those who have received the truth are to be instructed to look after the poor and the orphans. We are commanded to do good to all men, but especially to those that are of the household of faith. It is right that

²⁵ Ellen White to Brother Irwin, Oct 11, 1899, p 2 I-157.

we should expect help from the community where the work is carried on.²⁶

W C White and the Australasian Context

Soon after the formation of the Australasian Union Conference in 1894, President W C White, A G Daniells, and W A Colcord, senior officers in the Union sent what they called an “Epistle” to “the officers of the [local] churches” in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand. The officers of the local church who should read this “epistle” first were listed as elders, deacons, the clerk, the Sabbath-School Superintendent, and the Tract Society Librarian” and any other officers if there should be any. The six-page listing of instructions signed by Union Conference President W C White stressed that “The Church of God, is not only a fold where the sheep and lambs are to be fed, but it also [is] an army, to be trained for conquest.”

Because of the lack of a stationary pastorate within 19th century Adventism, the local church was instructed:

The Senior Elder is Chairman of the meeting, unless another person is chosen to preside. When a minister is present, he is by virtue of his position in the conference, a member of the council, and if well acquainted with the affairs of the church, he may properly be requested to preside.²⁷

Besides describing the various meetings relating to the local church, four subjects for consideration were listed: 1. spiritual condition of the church; 2. business affairs of the church; 3. missionary work of the church; 4. The Sabbath School. While the local church was asked to respond to the “demands of the times” within its community and “who should be encouraged to engage more extensively in the work” and “how may they labor to the best advantage” and whether there was sufficient funding for the literature to be distributed, there was clearly no provision at the local church level to finance local church members to engage in such work. The local church would engage *privately* in the work that Mrs White described in her 1895 *Review and Herald* statement of July 6, 1895.

In February 1895, W C White attended the New Zealand Conference proceedings as a delegate at large. At that session, Margaret Caro was again voted the ministerial license by the conference. That made her one of a number of Seventh-day Adventist women to be placed within the ministerial category as Seventh-day Adventists defined ministry in the 19th century.

W C White’s letter to his mother, February 25, 1895, gives significant insight into the import accorded the women ministers in Australasia as directed by the Australasian Union Conference:

²⁶ Ellen White “The Work to Be Done,” Feb 28, 1900 pp 7-8, emphasis supplied.

²⁷ W C White “To the Officers of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches,” nd. WCW Bk 4, pp 470-75.

Miss Walker was encouraged to go to Queensland, because we felt that the completion of her training was a matter of much importance and we thought that Eld Starr was best prepared to give her the instruction that she needed. If I am correctly informed, Annie and Mariah Pierce, from Ballarratt, will soon be moving to NSW and after they have had a visit with the Reekie family, they would no doubt be willing to engage in Bible work. They are women of much experience, wisdom, and tact, and would be splendid help in Sydney, if we could afford to employ them.²⁸

It is obvious that trained women Bible workers, paid by the Australasian Union Conference from tithe funds, and crucial members of itinerant evangelistic teams, were functioning throughout Australia and New Zealand prior to Mrs White's ordination statement of July 1895. That fact should provide insight to Mrs White's expression: "let every individual labor *privately* or *publicly*," in spreading the gospel message.

In a letter written May 1895, W C White makes it explicit that women ministers in Australia were paid from tithe funds (as were the male Bible workers):

I believe that if a man and his wife who have had a good degree of experience with our work in its various branches, would come here, and say, "Now I will identify my interest with the brethren in Tasmania, for the building up of the work here, so long as the brethren will stand by us, and the Union Conference think we should work in that field." Then if he would situate himself so that his expenses were very small, so that he could live on a salary that was commensurate with the small incomes of the brethren, I believe that he would be able to stir them up to a more general, and more faithful payment of *tithes*, and that before long, there would be enough raised in Tasmania, *to pay the minister, and to support one Bible worker besides.*²⁹

Christian Help Work

Among the evangelistic tools used by A G Daniells (president of the Australasian Union Conference in 1899), at the Toowoomba campmeeting, were stereopticon slides of Seventh-day Adventist institutions. They depicted the Melbourne Helping Hand Mission, the Sanitarium at Summer Hill, NSW, the Adelaide Rescue Home for Women, the Napier New Zealand Bethany Home for Women, the Orphanage, the Old People's Home. By 1899, Seventh-day Adventists, because of the ministry known as Christian Help Work, were known throughout Australia and New Zealand and had more than doubled their membership between the beginnings of that ministry in 1894 and 1900.³⁰

The Christian Help Work idea was introduced by John Harvey Kellogg at the 1893

²⁸ W C White to Ellen G White, Feb 25, 1895, WCW Bk 7, p 201.

²⁹ W C White to G T Wilson, May 7, 1895, WCW Bk 7, p 289-90, emphasis supplied.

³⁰ From 1,146 in 1894 to 2,375 by 1900.

General Conference Session when he presented a series of six studies on “Missions and Missionary Work.” Besides pervading the United States, it was soon introduced into Australia by those studying under Kellogg at Battle Creek. It, however, assumed a different perspective within Australasia. It demanded that its practitioners care not only for the physical health of the individuals, but also that the “medical missionary” incorporate the skills of Bible ministry. A W Semmens and Merritt G Kellogg were early examples of this combined ministry within Australasia.

As early as January 1894, the *Bible Echo* in Australia reported the success of Christian Help Work in the United States. Reported G C Tenney:

Another line of work that is being taken up by our people at the present time, and upon which the blessing of God rests in a remarkable way, is the Christian Help Work, in which organised bands of workers go about through communities seeking cases of destitution or distress, and bringing relief in such ways as it is possible. This line of work is in direct harmony with the Scriptures for our days. Isa 58; Matt 25:31-45, etc. An opening for this kind of work appeared in Chicago, where an established mission passed into the hands of the managers of the Sanitarium, and this is made the centre of practical Christian work for the poor, unfortunate, and sinful of that great city. We are glad to see the interest in this. At the last session of the General Conference, the Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association was formed, and under the auspices of this society it is designed to carry forward this work by means of auxiliary societies in churches throughout the denomination.³¹

Indeed, the first meeting of the Australasian Union Conference at Middle Brighton, Victoria, January 15-25, 1894, already indicated the direction the Christian Help Work would take in Australia. With General Conference President O A Olsen in attendance and Dr M G Kellogg giving instruction along medical lines at the Union Conference and G B Starr instructing on how to give Bible readings, the Conference saw the potential for such work in Australia and passed this resolution:

Whereas, Earnest appeals have been made by Sister E G White and others to our brethren in Battle Creek and other places, who have had special opportunities to gain an experience in the work of the third angel’s message, and many have responded to these appeals, and have expressed their willingness to go wherever needed, therefore, Resolved, That we express our gratitude that many are giving heed to these appeals...and we invite them to give due consideration to the following suggestions:... Everywhere there is need for those who can care for persons in sickness, poverty, and distress; hence, a training in nursing, “Christian Help Work,” and Bible work, will be of

³¹ G C Tenney, “From the United States,” *Bible Echo*, Jan 29, 1894, p 28.

inestimable value.³²

By August 1894, Christian Help Work was firmly embraced within the suburbs of Melbourne. At the Prahan meeting August 11 and 12 the Christian Help Work as well as plans for the soon-to-be-established Bible School (later to become Avondale College) were considered. "The nature of the Christian Help work, its practical workings, and its needs were presented by Brn Daniells, Semmens, Faulkhead, and White."³³

Near the end of 1894, Anna Ingels, Australian Tract Society leader, described the beginning of the Christian Help Work in Australia:

Some five months ago the Christian Help work was started under the leadership of Brother Semmens. Seven bands were organized. The locality around the *Echo* office for some distance was divided into districts, with one band to each. Each district had two lady visitors, whose duty it was to make investigation and determine what help should be given to the destitute cases reported. Through this means many of the poor and needy have had their wants relieved and the gospel preached unto them. During the past six months there has been a greater interest manifested in this church in the missionary meetings than for years past, and the attendance has been increased fourfold. Bible readings, gospel conversations, and the circulation of literature are the leading lines of work. The Prahan society has been largely made up of the students of the Australasian Bible School. As the students have visited from house to house with the *Bible Echo* and with tracts, many souls have expressed their gratitude for these visits and publications, and gladly opened their homes to Bible readings. The Christian Help work was organized here also, and while it enabled the members to meet in some degree the temporal requirements of many families, it also opened the way to point sin-sick souls to the Saviour³⁴

It seems apparent that ministry defined as *Christian Help Work* involved training the laymembers of the local churches in both visiting, reporting physical needs within the families of the community, and in providing Biblical training to assist families along spiritual lines. While those from the local churches were lay volunteers, those who trained them were supported financially by the Australasia Union. Both Anna Ingels and A W Semmens were so supported. Semmens would later be ordained to the combined ministry of Christian Help Work and Bible worker.

In his series of sermons on the third angel's message at the General Conference Session of February 1895, A T Jones linked to Isaiah 58, as did Ellen White, in a major scriptural

³² Proceedings of the Australasian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Jan 15-25, 1894, *Bible Echo*, Feb 26, 1894, pp 62-63.

³³ *Bible Echo*, Aug 20, 1894, p 164.

³⁴ Anna L Ingels, "The Australian Tract Society," RH, Dec 4, 1894, pp 763-64.

rationale for the Christian Help Work that was then becoming as the major evangelistic thrust of the Church. At the session, he several times quoted the following from Ellen White:

Search heaven and earth, and there is no truth revealed more powerful than that which is manifested in mercy to the very ones who need your sympathy and aid in breaking the yoke, and setting free the oppressed. Here the truth is lived, the truth is obeyed, the truth is taught, as it is in Jesus.³⁵

By the 1897 General Conference Session, delegates were reporting how the Christian Help Work resulted in doubling their local church membership. Mrs S M I Henry, former evangelist of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, soon to head the "Women's Gospel Work" for Seventh-day Adventists, was asked to give an outline of her experience in Christian Help Work as a member of the WCTU.³⁶

Also by 1897, the Australasian *Bible Echo* in its column entitled "Bible Study" was applying the typical Bible Reading plan of asking short questions and providing the scriptural rationale for answering the question, and doing so giving the scriptural basis for Christian Help Work. Such texts as Isaiah 58, James 1:27, Matthew 25:40 figured prominently in the analysis. Also in 1897 the *Bible Echo* established a regular column entitled "Christian Help Work," and also emphasized Isaiah 58 within its scriptural rationale.³⁷

By the end of 1897 it had become apparent that the primary focus of the work in Australasia in its evangelistic outreach was the Christian Help Work as defined and applied within that division. In its tenth annual session, the Australian Tract Society reported the following:

There seems to have been a growing desire on the part of our churches to conform more nearly to our Saviour's method of work as revealed in His earthly life. Those engaging most largely in Christian Help work have been richly blessed in an increasing spirituality and brotherly love, and the work has resulted in removing prejudice and winning souls to Christ... Whereas, We believe that Christian Help work is the Lord's way of bringing the suffering and lost to a knowledge of the gospel, and all who engage in this work are greatly blessed: and--Whereas, Experienced labourers have been sent to our field to engage in this and kindred enterprises; therefore--Resolved, That we give special attention to this method of bringing the blessed gospel of physical, mental, and moral salvation to the needy....A G Daniells, President; A L Ingels, Secretary.³⁸

³⁵ A T Jones, "Third Angel's Message--No. 16," *General Conference Bulletin*, Feb 24, 1895, p 309.

³⁶ *General Conference Bulletin*, 1st quarter, 1897, pp 63-64.

³⁷ *Bible Echo*, June 28, 1897, pp 204-05; Dec 13, 1897, p 390.

³⁸ "Australian Tract Society," *Union Conference Record*, Jan-Feb 1898, p 14.

In 1897, W C White spent almost nine months in North America and published a number of "observations" in the *Review* that gave his perception of the progress of the work in that area. Certain of his observations make it apparent how pervasive the Christian Help Work was in North America and the importance he attached to it as it was being practiced in Australasia. In one of his reports, he bemoaned conditions at South Lancaster Academy, forerunner of Atlantic Union College, because of "the entire absence of any special instruction to fit students to care for the sick in connection with Christian Help work." White continued:

There is a great work to be done in our New England cities. The poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind of every nationality, are to be ministered to, and are to have an invitation to the great supper....Christ healed the sick, comforted the discouraged, lifted up the fallen, taught the ignorant, and preached the good news of the kingdom of God....As an education and training for Bible work is necessary, so also is a thorough education and training required that the worker may intelligently minister to the poor and the sick. And as, from this time forward, ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of the poor is to be carried forward by us hand in hand, is it not of the utmost importance that the education in both these branches go forward unitedly and with equal attention? I hope that the time has come when, in every one of our colleges and schools, as faithful attention will be given to the thorough instruction of students in nursing and Christian Help work as in Bible work. It is necessary sometimes to bring in an experienced minister to stand at the head of the Bible work; let us take as much pains to secure able and consecrated Christian physicians to perfect the work begun by teachers who are also trained nurses....Now is our time to work in the large cities; and the work is so great, and the laborers are so few, that we should at once take advantage of any measure that will economize time, money, or influence.³⁹

Medical Doctor, E R Caro, became a major figure in fostering the medical missionary work in Australia. He summarized the work in Australasia as of early 1898:

A corps of thirteen medical workers, consisting of two physicians, ten nurses, and a trained baker, are now at work in the Australasian colonies. Small companies have been located in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth, and in Christchurch, New Zealand. In addition to the above, nurses are being trained in connection with the Health Home in Sydney, and a special course in nursing, cooking, and hygiene, is being given by medical and scientific instructors at our school in Cooranbong. As fast as workers can be trained, they will be sent to churches in the different localities, to instruct those who are anxious to learn. The Spirit speaks expressly concerning the importance of training young men and women to become medical missionaries....

Opportunities are presenting themselves for engaging in work among the poor and the

³⁹ W C White, "Observations—No. 2," RH, Jan 4, 1898, pp 11-12. Within six months, Southern Lancaster Academy informed the *Review* readers that its instruction now included a full year study in Christian Help Work and giving Bible readings. RH, June 14, 1898, p 383.

needy. A home for released female prisoners has been established in New Zealand, and several orphans are being cared for in private homes in Melbourne and elsewhere. In addition, hundreds of visits have been made, and hundreds of treatments have been given to those who could not afford to pay for medical attention. As our earning institutions obtain the means to purchase better facilities for treating the sick, the increased income will enable us to use more workers, and to spend more money in assisting the unfortunate and the destitute....

None can doubt the necessity of putting forth more earnest efforts for the outcasts, the widows, and the fatherless....No opportunity of doing good to suffering humanity should be overlooked. Why not open our hearts and our homes to the needy, to the widow, to the orphans, and to the aged?...Christian Help Work can be undertaken by all, for the Lord has promised to help those who attend to the wants of the needy.

[Quoting Ellen White in RH, 1896] "The angels look upon the distressed members of God's family on the earth, and they are prepared to co-operate with the human agent in relieving oppression and suffering. When heavenly intelligences see those who claim to be sons and daughters of God, putting forth Christ-like efforts to help the erring, and manifesting a tender spirit toward the fallen, they press close to them, and bring to their remembrance the words that will soothe and uplift the soul."⁴⁰

In July 1898, A T Robinson wrote of the ongoing Christian Help Work in Australasia:

It was my intention to have written concerning the work of the home for the aged, the Helping Hand Wood Yard, the Laundry, which is to be opened soon, the work of caring for the orphans, the establishing of the electric Light Bath Institution, etc; but I fear I have already taken up too much space [in writing of the Helping Hand Mission of Melbourne], so will conclude by saying that we expect, in a few days, to publish the first number of a little paper called the "Helping Hand," the mission of which will be to report fully each month on the various lines of Christian Help work carried forward.⁴¹

The New South Wales Conference, meeting July 21-26, 1898, considered that "The Spirit of God is signally blessing the Christian Help Work in all parts of the harvest field," and recommended that every church within that conference engage in the Christian Help Work. During that session, delegates accepted the recommendations of the Committee on Credentials and Licenses (W C White, F L Sharp, G F Goodman) to grant ministerial licenses to Christian

⁴⁰ Dr E R Caro, "The Right Arm of the Message," *Union Conference Record*, April 1898, pp 54-55.

⁴¹ A T Robinson, "Christian Help Work in Melbourne," *Union Conference Record*, July 15, 1898, p 81.

Help workers A W Semmens and Dr E R Caro.⁴²

In September 1898 the *Bible Echo* devoted its entire eight-page issue to what it called its "Helping Hand Mission number." Articles described and pictured the Helping Hand and medical mission building in Melbourne; it discussed the opening ceremonies on September 12, 1898, and even described the details during the first night at the Mission. Within a month of its opening, the Melbourne Helping Hand Mission evangelist W Knight reported conversions from the evening gospel meetings. By November the Melbourne Helping Hand Mission was reporting major newspaper recognition throughout Victoria and a strong ranking among the benevolent institutions of Melbourne.⁴³

In early 1899, Ellen White again strongly endorsed the ministerial thrust Seventh-day Adventists fostered in Australasia:

It was thought that the time had fully come for us to make a decided effort to present the truth to the eighty thousand people of Newcastle and its surrounding towns; and we knew that the best possible way to do this was by holding a camp-meeting, following it with tent-meetings, accompanied by visiting, Bible work, the selling of the *Bible Echo* and religious and health books, and by Christian Help work and the establishment of a medical mission. Repeatedly during the last five years, it has been presented to me that a great work is to be done in the cities of Australasia, that the present is a favourable time to work, and that no time should be lost; and recently light has come to me, encouraging us to put forth greater efforts in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, and indicating that the time has come for us to enter Newcastle and its surrounding towns.⁴⁴

April 18, 1898, marked the formation of the Australasian Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association that functioned to "give general oversight to all lines of medical, missionary, and Christian Help work." Among those on the managing committee for the medical missionary work was Licensed Minister, Mrs Margaret Caro. At its April 27, 1899 meeting Association President A G Daniells, presented a string of Ellen White statements that provided the spiritual and practical rationale for the work of that Medical Missionary Association:

"Much of the prejudice that prevents the truth of the Third Angel's Message from reaching the hearts of the people might be removed if more attention was given to health reform. When people become interested in this subject, the way is often prepared for the entrance of other truths."

⁴² W L H Baker, Miss L Gregg, "New South Wales Conference," *Union Conference Record*, Aug 15, 1898, pp 89-90.

⁴³ *Bible Echo*, Sept 26, 1898; "The Melbourne Helping Hand Mission," *Union Conference Record*, Oct 15, 1898, p 106; The Secretary, Melbourne Helping Hand Mission, "The Helping Hand Mission," *Bible Echo*, Nov 28, 1898.

⁴⁴ Ellen White, "The Newcastle Camp-Meeting," RH, April 11, 1899, p 225.

“The prosperity of the medical missionary work is in God’s order. This work must be done; the truth must be carried to the highways and hedges.”

“Why has it not been understood from the Word of God that the work being done in medical missionary lines is a fulfilment of the scriptures? ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind....Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come, that My house may be filled.’⁴⁵

In his statement following his quotations from Ellen White Daniells noted how the Australasian model of medical-ministerial cooperation was working:

The chair was gratified to note the relations that had existed between the labourers of this Conference and the medical work. They have seconded it heartily, and done what they could to carry it forward; and this cordial relation has been fully reciprocated by the other side, the medical missionary labourers being just as deeply interested in evangelical work.⁴⁶

E R Caro, secretary of the Association, also referred to recent Ellen White statements about the Australasian model of ministry: “The medical work in Australia is destined to do more in this field than it has done even in America.” Said Caro: “We want nurses who are Bible workers; and we want Bible workers and canvassers who are nurses.”⁴⁷

Melbourne Helping Hand evangelist W Knight gave his one-year report and noted that 360 meetings with over 6,000 attended during the year. The Mission conducted 233 Bible studies with an average attendance of six. Sixty-six professed conversions resulted from those meetings. Knight continues:

Homes have been found for four old men and one baby girl. Fifty-eight men have been found billets, and medical attendance and treatment have been secured or provided for in 800 instances. Visits have been paid to the gaol, hospital, and other institutions, and numerous visits made to the docks and slums. Very many of our principal merchants have been called upon and brought into touch and hearty sympathy with our work....The choir of the North Fitzroy SDA Church has given a song service every Friday evening for many months in the mission hall, and occasionally friends from other churches have dropped in and helped us to sing. One man who has experienced the new birth this year says: “Nine months ago I was a drunkard, my wife had left me, I was homeless. To-day I am a

⁴⁵ “Second Meeting of the Conference,” *Union Conference Record*, July 12, 1899, p 13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Christian, a sober man, and have my home restored.”⁴⁸

A W Semmens, vice president of the South Australian Conference and holder of the ministerial license, reported on the Helping Hand Mission for Women within that conference. During a twenty-month period:

Twenty-nine adults and six children had been taken into the Home, and there had been twelve births. Of this number ten had gone back to their own homes, eleven to situations [sic], five to homes provided by friends, five infants had been boarded out, leaving five adults and two children in the Home now. Meals have been provided to the number of 8994; 532 garments; 178 lb of groceries; three pairs of blankets, a quantity of fruit, vegetables, and wood had been given away. The matron, Miss Semple, had paid 104 visits to the sick and poor.⁴⁹

Perspective From the General Conference

Shortly after returning from an extended trip to Australia and New Zealand, General Conference President O A Olsen explained his new understanding of ministry:

That which rests on my mind at present with much weight is the instructing of our people in practical work. I feel burdened to say to our ministers everywhere that, instead of going into a place and doing so much preaching in a general way, they should feel the burden of giving our churches instruction in practical work. There is nothing that will help the spiritual condition of our people so much as to get the people themselves to engage in practical work. The lines of work that are within the reach of every church, you can appreciate and understand as well as I; but in my mind they run something like this: First, every church should take an interest in Christian help work, as far as they have ability and understand how to take hold. Every intelligent person can do something in this line of work. I feel that in the past we have been too exclusive; that is, we have not mingled as much with our neighbors in the way of doing them good in a general way, as we ought to have done. Our burden has been too much in the way of proselyting [sic]; that is, the efforts we have put forth, in whatever line it was, were for the direct purpose of getting before the people our peculiar doctrines, and leading them to accept these....

[We should] show in our lives as well as in our profession, the daily practice of Christian principles,--love, kindness, gentleness,--a care for the needy and the suffering,--a disposition to visit the needy, and to comfort them with the Christian comfort,--without directly bringing the arguments in favor of the Sabbath, the nature of man, and such

⁴⁸ Mission Evangelist, “Helping Hand Mission, Melbourne,” *Bible Echo*, Feb 26, 1900, p 142.

⁴⁹ J H Woods, J Higgins, “South Australian Conference,” *Union Conference Record*, Aug 1, 1900, p 13.

questions, to bear upon their minds; but speak to them of the Christian hope, of the love of Christ, what he is to me individually, the comfort there is in Christ for the sorrowing, the suffering, the needy, and distressed, thus opening the soul to look to Jesus,—we would find that the result of such work could not be computed. Such work would lead the people, more than ever, to see that God is with us, that our hearts are filled with love to God, and love to our fellow-man, and that the principle of love actuates us in all our Christian work.⁵⁰

Olsen wrote Washington Conference President R S Donnell similarly:

To know the power of justification by faith is to live the life that Christ lived on the earth, to show forth the same interest in humanity, to put forth the same efforts for the salvation of souls, for the relief of the afflicted, for the helping of the needy. In these things we, as a people, ought to excel all others. The line of work which we call “Christian Help Work” is essentially important; and if we take hold of it as God would have us, our people would become noted for the practical blessings of Christianity....And the good works that we ought to do, and in which we ought to exceed others, is in the line of work that Christ himself performed while here on the earth....

Now, I know that times are hard; I know that you have a severe time out there, and that funds are scarce. I appreciate all that, and we may feel that we can not expend funds upon such a line of work; but from the light that God has given me [through Ellen White], and from the practical results that have come under my observation, I am satisfied that any Conference that can have the opportunity, can well afford to expend some money in that line of work, even if there has to be curtailment in some other lines....*Hereafter this branch of the work will receive much more attention than it has in the past. This must be so, if we shall meet the mind of the Spirit of God.*⁵¹

Olsen made it apparent that he regarded the Ellen White *Review* articles of 1895 as a call for Seventh-day Adventists to focus its attention in ministry to the Christian Help Work. He wrote Ellen White:

I am in the heartiest accord with the principles that you have brought out and developed in articles in the *Review and Herald* for some time in the past. They describe the situation just as it is, and the remedy you have also plainly pointed out. In all my labors during the camp-meeting season, I can not really say that I have preached one sermon, so-called. All my work has been in the line of practical instruction, dwelling upon the things that appear

⁵⁰ O A Olsen to W B White, Mar 19, 1895, OAO Bk 14, pp 184-85.

⁵¹ O A Olsen to R S Donnell, May 21, 1895. OAO Bk 14, p 377ff, bracketed insertion and emphasis supplied.

to me have been much neglected.⁵²

Not only the General Conference president, but also its secretary L A Hoopes, perceived that a new definition of ministry was entering Seventh-day Adventism:

There are some things that are taking place in the message for this time, that clearly indicate that God is going out ahead of his people....The message to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in [Luke 14:21], is the message for this time. Such a message as that will humble the heart of every laborer. It will lead him to take his place by the side of the outcast, the downtrodden, the oppressed, by the side of the one that is in the gutter, that is in debauch, that is out of Christ. Not only to take his stand by their side, but to go in to the marriage supper of the Lamb with them....Such a message as this is now going to the world.⁵³

Hoopes clearly linked the Christian Help Work focus to counsel received from Ellen White:

It seems that the message is taking on new features; or, in other words, we have reached the last phase of the call to the supper, and that is to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. That seems to be the burden of the messages that come from God's servants at this time. Recent testimonies have come to this place that have borne the same import. And when I see humble instruments going out and laboring for souls, finding access to places that we have not thought of entering before, and see the fruit that is being developed as a result of such work, it certainly proves that God is moving out in that direction. How encouraged we should be to think that we have reached that time in the history of the message.⁵⁴

Hoopes wrote similarly to former General Conference President George Butler:

I believe that we have reached a time as never before when this people will go out and labor for the poor outcasts, those that are in the gutters, in dissipation, and lead them to Christ....Just such a work as that is being done by God's dear children. To my mind it betokens a very important point in the history of our work. And the leading burden of the ministers at this time, together with some recent testimonies that come to this place, is that we are to do just this kind of work. It rejoices my soul that it is so.⁵⁵

⁵² O A Olsen to E G White, Sept 13, 1895. OAO Bk 14, p 916.

⁵³ L A Hoopes to Elder Grant Adkins, Sept 1, 1897. LAH Bk 22, pp 179-80.

⁵⁴ L A Hoopes to Mrs H P Booth, Sept 3, 1897. LAH Bk 22, pp 243-44.

⁵⁵ L A Hoopes to G I Butler, Sept 3, 1897. LAH Bk 22, p 250.

The messages from the General Conference went to lay men and women, local church leaders, ordained ministers and conference officials. Here Hoopes appeals to Elder W T Drummond who had conducted evangelistic meetings in Macon, Georgia, in the summer of 1897:

I have been writing to some brethren in other sections of the country about the Christian Help work, especially where they are starting it anew. It seems that the work is taking that turn; in fact *the Lord* [through Ellen White] *has called especial attention of all our churches, and especially those that are in the large cities, to this line of work.* It is quite difficult to get very much of a hearing at our tent-meetings if there is any very great prejudice in a place. But if our tent could be used as a sort of headquarters for the Christian Help work, it does seem to me that it would be made quite a center of attraction, and the principles that we as a people hold would be very much sought after. We surely have reached the time when the message is to go out into the highways and hedges.... Now I should think that in a city like Macon, there would be many openings of this kind....[Hoopes himself had often been asked] "Why don't you fellows labor for these people that are out of Christ, and not bother with the churches so much? Why don't you go and labor for those people that are away down in the ditch? If you labored on those lines more than you do, then we would think that you are not trying to proselyte [sic] so much." So you see, Brother Drummond, there is a great deal of force to it. And I feel persuaded that we need to work along that line more. Now as you are pitching the tent the second time, might it not be a splendid idea to do more work along that line?⁵⁶

Hoopes wrote Maritime Conference minister G E Langdon:

The work for our time demands a consecration, a zeal, an outpouring, a baptism of the Spirit of God such as we have never before experienced. God says that we shall go to the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. We have no compelling power in ourselves. Should we attempt to compel any one, it would be with the police club or with the sword of the civil arm. But when God compels, it is by the sword of the Spirit; it is that Spirit which is quicker and sharper than any two-edged sword, that cuts to the quick and the marrow, that divides between soul and spirit.

You can readily see, Brother Langdon, that that people who are in the highways and hedges are not those who are in the high and expensive mansions in our cities; it is not a people that are well housed and comfortably clothed and fed; but it is a people who, through sin and vice, through misfortune, have gotten into the condition in which they are; and many of them know nothing of Christ.... What they need is to have some one imbued with the Spirit of Christian hospitality, some one with Christ enthroned within, the sinner's friend, some one that has drunk deep of the sorrows and afflictions of a race of disappointed people, who knows how to sympathize with them in all their perplexities, their bereavements, their life of dissatisfaction with themselves,--if they can see Christ in

⁵⁶ L A Hoopes to Elder W T Drummond, Sept 20, 1897. LAH Bk 22, pp 491-92, emphasis supplied.

such a person as that, it looks altogether different from what he does in the story told by the pulpit orator.

Now, Brother Langdon, that is the kind of work that is to be done all through the mission field in New Brunswick. Every one who has named the name of Christ is to go out a personal representative and ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ....I am glad to learn that this Spirit is going everywhere, that all through the rank and file of our people we hear of the same stir being made among this people. It is so good to know that God is at work.⁵⁷

Margaret Caro, Licensed Minister

In 1893 Mrs White praised the ministry of licensed minister Margaret Caro. Indeed, Mrs White attended the meeting of the New Zealand Conference during the time "Sister M Caro," received the ministerial license.⁵⁸ Not only did Mrs White speak approvingly of her holding the ministerial license, but also approved her major role within the local church at Napier, New Zealand. "She speaks to the people, is intelligent and every way capable," stated Ellen White. In the absence of the stationary pastorate within 19th century Adventism, Mrs Caro obviously maintained a prominent position within that local church.⁵⁹

Mrs Caro, with others from the Napier local church, embraced Christian Help Work and focused upon the specific projects of assisting unwed mothers, former female prisoners and female alcoholics. After several years of such ministry, it became evident that a definite location was necessary to foster the ongoing ministry. The community was canvassed for funding and eventually funds allowed for the rental of a building "in the most aristocratic quarter of the city, on one of the hills for which Napier is famous." One of the members of the Christian Help Band of the Napier Seventh-day Adventist Church became the matron of the Bethany Home that formally opened February 16, 1898 by the Mayoress of Napier.⁶⁰

Mrs Caro described the successes of the home after its initial eighteen months of operation:

The Home is presided over by a matron, whose heart is full of love to God and love for fallen humanity, and yet possessing the firmness required for the place which she holds. She has the confidence of all classes, and can go anywhere to obtain the help required, and our work has been signally blessed in the evidences we have had of the poor lost

⁵⁷ L A Hoopes to Elder G E Langdon, Oct 25, 1897. LAH Bk 22, 807-09.

⁵⁸ At that same session, G T Wilson received the ordained ministers credential. The ministry of Wilson's wife would later assume prominence within Australasia and elsewhere. Andrew Simpson, "The New Zealand Conference," *Bible Echo*, May 15, 1893, p 156.

⁵⁹ Ellen White, Ms 22-1893.

⁶⁰ E R Caro, "The Napier Bethany Home," *Bible Echo*, Mar 7, 1898, p 77.

creatures that have been saved.⁶¹

Mrs Caro described “one of the hardest cases” that had involved her personal care. After her pastoral ministry, the woman affirmed that such care had saved her. “Now she is married, and they have sent to me for another to take her place” in the Home. After discussing a number of case studies, Mrs Caro concluded:

The cases mentioned here are but samples of the work we are enabled by the grace of God to do. Many others might be given, but these suffice for illustration, and this is why we refer to them.⁶²

Anna Ingles Hindson, Emily Appendorff, Australasian Ministers

In late 1898, Australasian Union Conference President A G Daniells considered that “West Australia is the best missionary territory in Australasia.” It was so because it was “the most needy.” Mrs Hindson (formerly Anna Ingles), Secretary and Treasurer of the West Australian Tract Society, supervised family visitation and periodical distribution. Two nurses, Ruth Jones and Leila Harker, represented the medical missionary branch within that area, and Emily Appendorff had recently been sent by the Union to do Bible and Christian Help Work after taking preparatory courses at Avondale School for Christian Workers. Evangelism was conducted by Elder Hare and Licensed Minister T H Craddock, although Hare was soon to transfer. The area was seen as particularly appropriate for the Christian Help Work, along with the evangelistic because, said Daniells:

The majority of the people are recent arrivals from various parts of the world. They are pilgrims and strangers, and are glad to meet kind, helpful friends. The country is new, sanitary arrangements are very defective, sickness, poverty, and sin abound. Now is our time to do good, helpful, gospel work in West Australia.⁶³

Early within the history of the development of Adventism in Western Australia came the establishment of its Perth Helping Hand Mission and a Helping Hand Laundry, most of the furnishings being supplied by the citizens of Perth. The leading newspaper, *West Australian*, gave consistent coverage to the Seventh-day Adventist Mission emphasis. Annie Hindson described the work of the Mission for the last quarter of 1898:

During the quarter the Union Conference has sent us substantial help in the way of a

⁶¹ Mrs Caro, “The Bethany Home, Napier, N.Z.,” *Union Conference Record*, July 19, 1899, p 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ A G Daniells, “West Australia,” *Union Conference Record*, Sept 15, 1898, p 96.

Bible worker. Sister Appendorff has been with us nearly three months, and has found more openings than she can fill. Her help has been very much appreciated by the Mission, and we feel satisfied that could one or two others be furnished us, that they would find an abundance of work. Sister Appendorff has started Sabbath meetings and a Sabbath school at Fremantle with the Sabbath-keepers there, and holds a company bible Reading during the week for the benefit of others. A Mission Sunday School has been started in Woodville, one of Perth's poorest suburbs, and Gospel meetings are to be opened in that district by Bro. Craddock.⁶⁴

The West Australian Mission is useful as a demonstration of how the Christian Help Work ministry operated. The beginnings can be said to have originated after a visit to the area by Union President Daniells in July of 1898. After Pastor Hare left in September, the primary ministerial responsibilities fell upon Licensed Minister Craddock. In October of 1898, Emily Appendorff was sent by the Union as a Bible-Christian Help worker. Miss Appendorff's work was described in the *Union Conference Record*:

Sister Appendorff has devoted a considerable portion of her time to the work in Fremantle, which is situated twelve miles from Perth, and is the second city in size in the colony. Several have taken their stand there, uniting with the Perth church. Sabbath meetings and a Sabbath school have been opened in the home of one of the sisters, and there is an encouraging outlook for the spread of the truth in that city.... Prior to the organization of what is known as the Helping Hand Mission, some of the members had been doing a good work in caring for the sick, and relieving the wants of the poor, but without any organized plan. The organization of the mission gave a new impetus to the work. In the weekly missionary meetings plans are discussed, and means devised for helping the many needy cases that come under observation. From the first the Lord greatly blessed these efforts, and good results attended the work. Each member of the church was assigned certain streets, and as time permitted, they made a house-to-house visitation in the streets allotted to them, searching out the cause of the needy, and interesting those who were able to assist in the work. The mission was started at a very opportune time, for never before has there been such need and destitution in Perth as during the past year. The efforts of the workers were not only appreciated by those for whom they were directed, but others engaged in, or in sympathy with, similar lines of philanthropic work, have recognised our work and rendered all the assistance possible. At different times favourable mention has been made of our mission in the leading papers, in which our quarterly reports have also been inserted without charge. The donations for this work were given almost exclusively by the public, and during the first six months amounted to about 45 pounds in money, besides other substantial gifts in groceries and

⁶⁴ A L Hindson, Mission Secretary, "West Australian Mission," *Union Conference Record*, April 26, 1899, p 3.

clothing.⁶⁵

The Helping Hand Laundry, even very early in its establishment, had provided employment and funding for a number of the unemployed of Perth. Its report as of July 1899 noted that “about seven families are being supported wholly or in part by the laundry.”⁶⁶

Changes in the personnel with the West Australian Mission provide additional illustration of how ministry operated within Australasia, both within its definitions of ministry and in its male-female composition:

Within the past few months a number of changes have taken place in the laborers. Pastor Pallant has been sent to take charge of the Mission; Brother Chapman to act as Canvassing Agent; Sister Walker to engage in Bible work, while the former Secretary of the Mission and Tract Society has been superseded by sister Annie Higgins. Brother Reekie, the oldest and leading canvasser, has also been called away to engage in work connected with the school. At the present time the workers consist of one minister, one licensed preacher, two bible workers, one canvasser, and two nurses.⁶⁷

Dr and Mrs A W Semmens

In late 1892 Mrs White wrote, “I have been shown that physicians who practice in our churches should come under the supervision of the church as fully as the minister.”⁶⁸ That philosophy contrasted the thrust of the Christian Help Work in Australasia from that practiced within North America. Indeed, events within North America where the medical work for various reasons became completely dominated by John Harvey Kellogg, eventually played a major role in the demise of the Christian Help Work by the late 1890s. It was the Australian model, however, that was fostered by Ellen White.

In August 1893, W C White responded to the circular letter and tracts sent out by the Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association describing the inauguration of the Christian Help Work. White’s urgent request to the secretary of the Association, a copy of which he sent his mother, asked for “a man and his wife who have been thoroughly trained in your schools, to take up the work and carry it forward.” He wanted a team that could “give instruction to our church members regarding health and temperance principles, and how to organize Christian Help work.” He considered the crisis situation within Australasia as a crucial time for such ministry: “There are thousands upon thousands who need a little sensible nursing to put them on their feet,

⁶⁵ n.a., “The West Australian Mission,” *Union Conference Record*, July 14, 1899, pp 13-14

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p 14.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*.

⁶⁸ Ellen White Testimony, Dec 19, 1892 in Special Testimonies, Vol 2 (1880-94), p 127.

who cannot get into the hospitals, and who will not call a doctor because they cannot pay the doctor's bill."⁶⁹

Willie White was surprised and chagrined, however, when Dr and Mrs Semmens suddenly arrived in Australia and began pursuing their line of work in the slums of Australia as they had done in the Chicago Mission. Because the Australasian Union Conference lacked funding for such work if it was not combined with Bible work (that the Australasian concept of Christian Help Work came to endorse), W C White wrote to J H Kellogg:

In conjunction with your brother [M G Kellogg, another medical doctor then in Australasia] they [the Semmens] have organised several Christian Help Bands which are doing good work....We shall try to use them to the best advantage in Conference work. They are now in Sydney, preparing for the camp-meeting. They will take charge of the dining tent. I shall do all I can to try to secure an invitation for them to visit New Zealand, and visit the principle churches before or after the New Zealand camp-meeting, and to help what they can in the camp-meeting. The plan I have advocated is this: that your brother [Dr Merritt Kellogg] shall visit the churches first, giving them lectures on missionary and health topics, and to prepare their minds for the work which Semmens and the doctor together conduct.⁷⁰

By November, W C White could write the president and members of the New Zealand Conference Committee that Brother and Sister Semmens could be a bright prospect for advancing the work in New Zealand. He recommended the team "to help open up the Christian Help work." Brother Semmens had developed into a "good visitor, and Bible worker, and would be good help in Auckland, I think."⁷¹

In 1895, the Semmens' ministry worked with Elder Corliss evangelistic meetings in the Sydney area. W C White reported that Brother Semmens was quite distressed "over the number of good openings and urgent demands for Bible readings, which is greater than they can find time to attend to." White described that team methodology popularized by J O Corliss through the influence of Ellen White:

You may have heard of the plan we have been working on here in Sydney and in Auckland. The minister who has the most experience, and who takes the chief burden of the work, holds a Bible study at his house about three mornings in each week. To this Bible study his associates in the work, the Bible readers, and the colporters, are all invited, also church officers, leading brethren and sisters, and persons who are becoming interested in the truths presented from the desk. Here the Bible workers get an inspiration for their work, and after the Bible lesson they remain a few minutes for counsel and

⁶⁹ W C White to Eld L McCoy, Aug 16, 1893. White, W C. 1893 White Estate.

⁷⁰ W C White to J H Kellogg, Sept 24, 1894. WCW Bk 6, p 169.

⁷¹ W C White to G T Wilson, Nov 16, 1894. Copied to Foreign Mission Board.

instruction. We believe that God's blessing has rested upon this effort, and we see that our Bible workers are growing in knowledge and in power.⁷²

By the next year, W C White considered that Semmens had developed into a full-fledged conference worker: "Semmens has given some very telling sermons in the churches, and in the tent. He is growing." This interrelated Christian Help Work-evangelistic work is nicely illustrated when a husband-wife ministerial team was returning to Lord Howe's Island. Willie White wrote to Foreign Mission Board Secretary F M Wilcox:

In their work on Lord Howe's Island, Bro and Sr Barron have felt greatly the need of some experience and training in nurses work. And so I arranged for her to spend five or six weeks with Bro Semmens receiving instruction in the elementary principles, and learning how to carry forward the study herself. Bro. Semmens had considerable Christian Help Work on hand, in which Mrs Barron could assist him, and thus obtain a practical experience along with her study. She has done this with much satisfaction to herself and her teacher, and will no doubt be much better prepared to be a real help to her husband on Lord Howe or in any other island work in which they may engage.⁷³

Again the next month, Willie White referred to the ministry embraced by the Semmens. While the Union Conference continued to debate the wisdom of inaugurating a "Bath House" that the Semmens' would operate, White considered that Bible work and "taking time to do such Christian Help work, as comes in his reach" should be undertaken.⁷⁴ By August 1896, another dimension of the Australasian approach to Christian Help Work and its difference from that generally practiced within North America became apparent. W C White outlined the implications of establishing the Sydney Bath House to the Australasian Union Conference executive committee:

You may be familiar with the circumstance which attended the coming back to Australia, of Bro & Sr Semmens, and with the fact that they have always looked forward to the time when they should be principally engaged caring for the sick. Dr Kellogg has never been able to understand why our Conferences should not employ them to work in the interests of the Sick and Suffering, and to instruct our people in the principles of healthful living, the same as many workers trained at the Sanitarium are employed by the American Conferences. He has been very much dissatisfied that Bro Semmens was so largely employed in evangelistic work. We have been anxious to make a beginning in some line of work that would be largely self-supporting, and that would provide an opportunity for

⁷² W C White to Elder J M Cole, Sept 13, 1895. WCW Bk 8, p 200.

⁷³ W C White to O A Olsen, Mar 13, 1896. WCW Bk 9, p 347. W C White to F M Wilcox, May 29, 1896. WCW Bk 9, pp 491-92.

⁷⁴ W C White to M C Israel, June 16, 1896. WCW Bk 10, p 72.

the sick among us to have rational treatment, and that would also open the way for the training of Christian Help workers....

From our experience with the health work, and health institutions in America, and from the testimonies sent to the managers and physicians at the Sanitariums, during the last twenty-five years, our brethren came to the unanimous opinion, that it was right, and essential to the highest success of the health work, that our health institutions should be sustained, and directed by the body, acting through properly appointed Committees. And that all physicians and nurses should be as fully under the supervision of the general body, as are the ministers and Bible workers.

It is the recognition of these principles, that has led to the rapid growth of our health institutions, and our Medical Mission work in its various branches, during the last seven years....The New South Wales Conference is not strong enough to carry this [Bath House] work alone, but is willing to guarantee One Pound a week, with the expectation that Bro Semmens will conduct services on Sabbath, Sunday nights, and Tuesday nights, and that he will improve every opportunity to instruct our brethren and sisters in healthful living, and Christian help work. We have thought that the Union Conf Comm was the proper one to take general supervision of such enterprises. And we have thought that it would be right for our friends in all the colonies to unite in the establishment of this Bath House in Sydney, and when we are ready to establish another, let all contribute to its upbuilding.⁷⁵

By November 1896, A W Semmens had been elected vice president of the New South Wales Conference and granted the ministerial license and W C White reported to the Foreign Mission Board the work he and Mrs Semmens were conducting:

For some months they have been laboring in Sydney and its suburbs. He combines the work of a colporter-evangelist and a missionary-nurse, and his labors are very effective. He is becoming one of the best Bible workers we have, and I think he is being much benefited by the course of instruction he is receiving from Eld Corliss. We have requested him to make a careful study of Sydney, with reference to the proper location of a bath house, and the best manner of conducting it. We have hoped that within a few months we could secure a suitable location where Bro Semmens could establish a bath house, in connection with a residence for his family and three or four other workers; and that from this as a center he could work out, giving massage and other lines of treatment in various parts of the city. We think that this might lead to many openings for missionary work, both in health and temperance and in gospel lines.⁷⁶

In his appeal for funds to continue the advance of the Christian Help Work in Australasia, W C White described the experience of Brother and Sister Semmens:

⁷⁵ W C White to Executive Committee of the Australasian Union Conference, Aug 11, 1896. WCW Bk 10, pp 328 ff.

⁷⁶ W C White to Eld Robert Hare, Nov 20, 1896 and to Foreign Mission Board.

About a year ago Brother A W Semmens, in accordance with the counsel and advice of his brethren, opened a health home in Ashfield, in a seven-room cottage. There was very little with which to start this work except our knowledge that it was a work greatly needed, and the confidence of the people secured by Brother Semmens during two years of labor as a Bible worker and missionary nurse....

Our brethren in New South Wales highly appreciate the work done at the health home, and that accomplished by Brother and Sister Semmens in giving them instruction in practical hygiene and in Christian Help work in their churches and their homes. Our people in the other colonies, seeing what a good work has been accomplished amid great difficulties, have taken courage, and are pleading for physicians and nurses in Queensland, New Zealand, and Victoria.

We sincerely believe that the time has fully come for us to make an advance move, and establish the medical missionary work in the colonies upon a broad and practical basis. There are physicians ready to go. There are trained nurses from the colonies ready to return. Dr Caro and his wife have started, and others are ready, but are waiting for funds with which to pay traveling expenses. Who will help?

I need not apologize for these requests, for you know of the financial distress in Australia, and of the limited resources of our brethren there. At one time our situation was presented to my mother in this way: She saw our Australasian brethren standing on a precipice, and across the deep water our American brethren on the cliffs. We in Australasia were asking for help, and our American brethren were reaching out their arms, ready to respond, but there was the separating sea, and the question was asked, "How can we make connection?"

I have hoped that my visit to the States would help to make the connection. Workers have been chosen, and arrangements made; now we ask you to do what you can to make effective these arrangements, so that the blessed and glorious work of the missionary nurse and the medical missionary may be felt in each one of our seven Australasian colonies.⁷⁷

The Corliss Ministerial Team

While Ellen White frequently criticized ministers to Australasia who spend most of their effort in "sermonizing," she frequently praised the methodology of J O Corliss. A major camp-meeting and evangelistic focus was held in Middle Brighton, a suburb of Melbourne, January 5 to 15, 1894. Its results far exceeded expectations and leaders decided "that Elder Corliss, together with other helpers, should remain in Middle Brighton, where the camp-meeting was held, to follow up the interest created by the meetings already held."⁷⁸

As he pursued his ministry around the Melbourne area, Corliss related to the counsel he had received from Ellen White: "I quite agree with you that persons ought to be selected to give

⁷⁷ W C White, "Medical Missionary Work in Australasia," RH, June 22, 1897.

⁷⁸ *Bible Echo*, Jan 29, 1894, p 32.

personal labor, but I do not know where they are or who will provide them. I trust that the Lord will bring these matters all around in His own good time.” It is apparent that Ellen White urged that workers be “selected” for personal work. This appears to harmonize with what she would identify in her July 9, 1895 *Review* article as those who should labor *publicly*. Certainly those who labored *privately* or did volunteer local church work would not be able to travel to the various locations where Corliss ministered.⁷⁹

By July of 1894, Mrs White reported that “Elder Corliss said that he does not preach any more, he teaches.” Corliss emphasized the Bible reading plan developed by Stephen Haskell in the 1880s thus presenting scriptural topics to his new converts in question and answer form. “Bro Corliss turned the meeting into a class meeting and called upon them one by one to be Christ’s witnesses,” praised Ellen White.⁸⁰

In Tasmania, Corliss linked up with medical doctor M G Kellogg as the team emphasized the compassionate ministry of Jesus. After the series of meetings, Kellogg remained and continued the Australasian style of ministry. By November 1894, Dr M G Kellogg was ordained to the gospel ministry.⁸¹ By December 1894, Corliss had a team of workers with him as he pursued Australasian ministry:

There is a growing interest in the tent-meetings at Ashfield, a suburb of Sydney. In addition to the labours of Elders Corliss and McCullagh, who are conducting the meetings, a number of workers are engaged, under their direction, in visiting and holding Bible-readings.”⁸²

By February the work in Australasia had clearly outpaced the available finances and Union President W C White appealed for the Foreign Mission Board to redefine some of the Australasian Conferences to Mission status and thereby finance some of the work. White reported his discussion with his mother on this matter and when the proposal that some of the youthful conference ministers go into canvassing, Mrs White “has condemned, and has reproved us for it, and we have abandoned it.” W C White continued his report to the Foreign Mission Board:

When I was arguing the case with mother, I told her of our Conference indebtedness, and that we must curtail somewhere, and asked if she would consent to our sending away some of the older men to give the young men a chance. She said No. We cannot spare men of experience and ability. Again I pictured to her our financial condition, and the

⁷⁹ J O Corliss to E G White, May 23, 1894. Corliss, J O 1894-95 WE.

⁸⁰ Ellen White to James and Emma White, July 27, 1894. W85-94.

⁸¹ *Bible Echo*, Sept 10, 1894, p 188; “Australian Conference Proceedings,” *Bible Echo*, Nov 12, 1894, p 351.

⁸² *Bible Echo*, Dec 3, 1894, p 376.

horrors of debt. Then she said, If this is your situation, Why in the world does not your committee bestir itself, and place the facts, and an appeal before the General Conference. I told her it was not the custom of our people to use the funds of the General Conference in prosecuting the work in organized conferences. Mother then said, I do not know your rules, nor regulations, but I know from the light given me, that the cities of Australia ought to be worked, and that they ought to be worked now. This set me thinking on new lines.⁸³

Within a few days, W C White was informing the Foreign Mission Board of a proposed restructuring of the work in Australasia. A few sections of his proposal are here given since it clearly presents the Australasian practice of ministry:

In your consideration of our plans for the division of Australia into two Conferences, and two Missions, you may wish to know what we could do in the distribution of laborers. I will roughly outline a division which I shall submit to the consideration of the Union Conf.

1. Queensland--Let Geo Teasdale and wife, take the place of Eld Hickox and wife, so that Hickox could go to Western Australia. Thus your Queensland list of laborers would be, Geo B Starr and wife, Geo Teasdale and wife; Bro Bernoth (German) and Sr Walker, a young lady of real piety and ability, lately sent up to engage in Bible Work.
2. Western Australia--Let Eld A S Hickox and wife and Jesse Pallant and wife, *be set apart*⁸⁴ for the work in W.A. and let Eld Corliss go with them to inaugurate the work, with the expectation of his working with them for four to six months.
3. New South Wales--Let Elders McCullagh, and Israel, and Bro John Collins be the laborers in this new Conference, if it can bear so many laborers, and if not, leave Israel in Victoria. Mother and I can help some, and this would no doubt be the Home Conf of Eld Corliss.
4. Fiji--Let Dr M G Kellogg, and Eld J M Cole go to Fiji, and open up the work in that great field. Canvassers could be sent to join them, if there is found to be a field for them, and teachers, as soon as they are needed.
5. Central Australian Conference--Elders A G Daniells; Robert W L H Baker; with some help from Eld W A Colcord, would make the working force of this big Conference. There are a number of promising Bible workers that could be called into the work, if there is support for them.⁸⁵

⁸³ W C White to Foreign Mission Board, Feb 20, 1895. WCW Bk 7, p 191. Mrs White would soon begin supporting several of the youthful ministers with her own funds.

⁸⁴ Italics supplied. Whether Willie White had a deeper meaning to this expression can only be guessed. A few months later, however, Ellen White would use that phrase and add "laying on of hands" to be applied to women.

⁸⁵ W C White to SDA Foreign Mission Board, Mar 11, 1895. WCW Bk 7, p 215.

When Corliss went to conduct meetings in New Zealand, he again wrote Mrs White something about his methodology. From his experience it becomes apparent what is meant by *privately* laboring in the gospel:

Among those who signed the covenant last Sabbath were five young ladies, or perhaps more properly, girls, all belonging to the same family. This family and their immediate connections number nineteen. This introduction of the truth is turning all of the family to investigating, and it is possible that all of them may receive it. We have learned this evening that the mother has also decided to obey, and as she visited with one of the workers, seemed to be much rejoiced in her decision. These who have already accepted the truth did not attend the meetings much at first, but were found and visited frequently by two of our girl workers, Alice Steed and Minnie Teasdale, who had never had an experience in this work before, and the results of their visiting have made me feel that more of our people could do something in this work if they were only trusted. I once felt like many others that only experienced laborers could be trusted with responsibilities in this work. I fear that much has been lost in the past by this policy, and as far as I am concerned am resolved to adopt a policy of confiding in all who are disposed to unselfishly labor in the Master's vineyard. If permitted, God can do much through those whom we have been accustomed to consider weak instruments. I am more and more surprised at the wonderful things God is able to do when we trust him.⁸⁶

The interrelation between *private* and *public* laborers again becomes apparent when W C White reported to George B Starr on Corliss' most recent evangelistic team methodology in New South Wales. W C White spoke of his July 26, 1895, meeting:

I had gone early in the morning to attend the Monday morning council, which is held regularly at the house of Eld Corliss, with his workers. At nine o'clock all the workers, and other brethren and sisters gather in a Bible study. There were sixteen present yesterday morning, and the study was very profitable, both for the workers and for the others. I am more and more impressed that this feature of Eld Corliss's work is of great value, not only as an education and training for those associated with him in the work, but also as a means of instructing persons who may be bearing burdens in the church, or who may be called upon in later years to bear responsibilities. While in Auckland these studies were held every morning, the same as in Ashfield. But this was so taxing upon the teacher, who was also speaking frequently, and it took so much of the time of the workers, that I have urged that but three lessons a week be given during our present series of meetings. As far as I can observe, this plan is working well, and I recommend it to your consideration. I hope the time will come when such classes will be conducted in connection with every important series of meetings. I believe it will strengthen the

⁸⁶ J O Corliss to E G White, Mar 18, 1896, p 1-2. Corliss, J O 1894-95 WE.

burden-bearers in the church most effectually.⁸⁷

White also recommended to Starr a method of duplicating Bible readings that would be held with families and making them available to those studying. White considered that “the result would fully compensate for the labor, providing that a considerable portion of the labor could be performed by Srs. Starr, Teasdale, and Walker, with some assistance from volunteers.” Again we have a combination of laborers who are laborers under the conference with those from local churches that are volunteers: laboring *publicly* and *privately*.⁸⁸

W C White praised the Corliss approach to General Conference President O A Olsen. Again we see an illustration of the relationship between what would be defined as conference workers and local church workers:

I am more and more satisfied that the plans on which Elder Corliss is endeavoring to work, are in harmony with Apostolic methods. We have been very much encouraged by the growth in wisdom and in efficiency of the young men who are working with him, and we are much pleased with the results of their labors. There is now such a demand for Bible readings upon the part of the people to whom we have been distributing the printed sermons that we shall arrange to release Brn Semmens and Pallant from the work of distribution, that they may spend their entire energies in holding readings. They are now carrying six or eight readings each a week. The attendance varies from four to twenty, and the places where these readings are held are widely separated, and in many different suburbs. Hardly a week passes but there are four or five new Sabbath keepers, who have embraced the truth as the result of these readings, and their attendance on a few of the Sunday night meetings. The preaching and the house to house work go hand in hand; neither one would be complete without the other. Last Sunday morning Eld Prescott and I were present at the morning lesson. There were thirty four in attendance. Of this number, about one third were workers, and their families; one third more church officers and Sabbath keepers of some experience; and one third were new converts or persons investigating. I believe there is great power in these morning classes to strengthen the workers, the believers, and those investigating.⁸⁹

Among the last actions of J O Corliss in Australasia before returning to the United States was his ordination of the deaconess, Bertha Larwood, to her responsibilities in the local church at

⁸⁷ W C White to George B Starr, July 30, 1895. WCW Bk 7, p 502

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p 503.

⁸⁹ W C White to O A Olsen, Aug 20, 1895. WCW Bk 8, pp 113-14.

Perth, Western Australia.⁹⁰

The method of fully integrating both conference workers and local church members seems to have been consistently practiced throughout the 1890s in Australasia. In early 1899 W C White wrote his brother Edson, who was working in the South in the United States:

At Ballarat we found that the camp-meeting had stirred the people of the city wonderfully. The attendance was nearly as good as at Newcastle....The meeting was appointed to continue ten days, but it was extended one week. During this last week about seventy-five of our people remained on the grounds. From these about forty-five were organized into three companies of workers—first the trained Bible workers and evangelists; second strong corps of canvassers to work under the direction of the general agent; third a large company of inexperienced workers who gave their service three weeks and were to receive instruction daily with the others. I tell you, my brother, this is the way to follow the interest aroused by a camp-meeting.⁹¹

“If the Husband Should Die”: Mrs Jennie Wilson

The Tithe Factor

In the latter part of her ministry in Australasia, Mrs White made a series of three statements that taken together seem in this reviewer’s opinion to link the women ministers of Australasia, nature of Australasian ministry, and implications concerning ordination of women. The issue surrounds the question of use of tithe.

[Statement 1]: I send you this morning a letter written for America, and sent there yesterday morning, which will show you how I regard the tithe money being used for other purposes. This is the Lord’s special revenue fund, for a special purpose. I have never so fully understood this matter as I now understand it. Having questions brought directly home to me to answer, *I have had special instruction from the Lord that the tithe is for a special purpose, consecrated to God to sustain those who minister in the sacred work, as the LORD’s CHOSEN to do his work not only in sermonizing, but in ministering.* They should understand all that this comprehends. There is to be meat in the house of God, a treasury well supplied, and it is not to be diverted to other purposes. There is to be special labor given to awaken the people of God, who believe the truth, to give a faithful tithe to the Lord, and ministers should be encouraged and sustained by that

⁹⁰ W C White to Members of the Union Conference committee, July 15, 1896. WCW Bk 10, p 195.

⁹¹ W C White to J E White, Feb 7, 1899. WCW Bk 12, pp 440-41.

tithe.⁹²

[Statement 2]: Some women are now teaching young women how to work successfully as visitors and Bible readers. Women who work in the cause of God should be given wages proportionate to the time they give to the work. God is a God of justice, and if the ministers receive a salary for their work, their wives, who devote themselves just as interestedly to the work as laborers together with God, should be paid in addition to the wages their husbands receive, notwithstanding that they may not ask this. As the devoted minister and his wife engage in the work, they should be paid proportionate to the wages of two distinct workers, that they may have means to use as they shall see fit in the cause of God. The Lord has put his Spirit upon them both. If the husband should die, and leave his wife, she is fitted to continue her work in the cause of God, and receive wages for the labor she performs....

This question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it. You are to do your duty to the *women who labor in the gospel*, whose work testifies that they are essential to carry the truth into families. Their work is just the work that must be done. In many respects a woman can impart knowledge to her sisters that a man can not. The cause would suffer great loss without this kind of labor. Again and again the Lord has shown me that women teachers are just as greatly needed to do the work to which *he has APPOINTED them* as are men. They should not be compelled by the sentiments and rules of others to depend upon donations for their payment, any more than should the ministers....

There are women who should labor in the gospel ministry. In many respects they would do more good than the ministers who neglect to visit the flock of God. Husband and wife may unite in this work, and when it is possible, they should. The way is open for consecrated women.⁹³

[Statement 3]: There are ministers' wives, Srs. Starr, Haskell, *Wilson* and Robinson, who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive their wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." When any such decision as this is made, I will in the name of the Lord, protest. *I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money, to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.* I know that the faithful women should be paid wages as is considered proportionate to the pay received

⁹² Ellen White to "Brother Daniells," Mar 16, 1897, p 1. Special Testimonies 1897 Vol, emphasis supplied.

⁹³ Ellen White, "The Laborer is Worthy of His Hire," Ms 43a-1897, pp 1ff, emphasis supplied.

by ministers. They carry the burden of souls, and should not be treated unjustly. These sisters are giving their time to educating those newly come to the faith and hire their own work done, and pay those who work for them. All these things must be adjusted and set in order, and justice be done to all....Ministers' wives, who carry a tremendous responsibility, devoting their entire time, have nothing for their labor. This will give you an idea of how matters are in this [New South Wales] Conference. There are seventy-five souls organized into a church, who are paying their tithes into the Conference, and as a saving plan it has been deemed essential to let these poor souls labor for nothing. But this does not trouble me, for I will not allow it to go thus.⁹⁴

After ministerial labor in Michigan, West Virginia, and Georgia, Gilbert and Jennie Wilson were sent as missionaries to New Zealand, where G T Wilson served as president of the New Zealand Conference. Later they assumed ministerial responsibilities in Tasmania and Australia. In 1898 Mrs White commented upon the nature of the ministry then being conducted within the Stanmore suburb of Sydney:

The interest continues to be good. Bro and Sr Haskell, Bro and Sr Starr, and Bro and Sr Wilson are at work. Meetings have been held in the tent on Sabbaths and Sundays, and every evening in the week except Monday. The workers visit from house to house, laboring personally with the people. They have so many calls that the three married couples separate, one going to one place and one the other, to hold readings with those who are interested. New families, one after another, are soliciting help, and the workers say that ten or twenty more could be employed to good advantage. In the mission there is a company of twelve. Two classes are held every day, that the workers may receive instruction from the Bible, and know how to work to enlighten others.⁹⁵

Gilbert Wilson died of tuberculosis at age 41 in Brisbane, Queensland, January 13, 1899. Jennie then served as preceptress at the Avondale School for about a year. An observation by Ellen White in 1900 illustrates more directly how Jennie Wilson was then continuing the kind of ministry she and her husband had conducted during their marriage. In speaking of the work in Maitland, NSW Mrs White observed:

Brother Colcord, and Brother and Sister Hickox, and Brother and Sister James from Ballarat, and Sister Robinson and *Sister Wilson*, are doing just as efficient work as the ministers; and some meetings *when the ministers are all called away, Sister Wilson takes*

⁹⁴ Ellen White to "Brn Evans, Smith and Jones," April 21, 1898 ("Copy for Geo A Irwin"). I191a-1898. Special Testimonies, Vol 6 1897-98, pp 68-69, emphasis supplied.

⁹⁵ Ellen White, C6-1898, p 2.

*the Bible and addresses the congregation; and Sister James says she does excellently.*⁹⁶

As we consider the context for Mrs White's statements about payment of women ministers from Conference (tithe) funds, their ordination to either *public* or *private* ministry, the role in bringing the gospel to families, and the fact that some gave the spoken word during Sabbath services in local churches and then recognize that all of these clearly related to Jennie Wilson, it seems apparent that for today's Church to be in harmony with the counsels of Ellen White, administrative action to ordain women to gospel ministry is demanded.

After a year of ministry in Maitland, Jennie Wilson served as Bible worker and trainer of "young ladies" as Bible workers in the South Australia Conference. She continued to minister to newly baptized believers in the aftermath of campmeetings when the ordained conference ministers conducted meetings in new fields.⁹⁷ J H Woods, President of the South Australia Conference reported baptisms resulting from the work of the Bible workers led by Jennie Wilson in that field.⁹⁸

Jennie's ministry continued after she returned to the United States in 1902. She ministered in Michigan and Tennessee and in 1907 married ordained minister W W Williams. They ministered together in varying capacities, including self-supporting work for awhile. Jennie died in 1938.

Scripture Within the Australasian Context; Conclusion

As Ellen White analyzed the situation in Australasia from the early 1890s onward, she developed a scriptural rationale that she believed outlined a ministry appropriate to the impoverished situation many faced in that location. While a number of biblical texts were used in relation to the situation there, Ellen White seemed primarily to center upon two Old Testament and two New Testament passages: Luke 4 with Isaiah 61 and Luke 14 with Isaiah 58.

The Luke 4 passage served to identify the ministries that would be linked to the ministry practiced by Jesus on behalf of the poor and needy, while the Luke 14 passage about the parable of the great supper emphasized a ministry in the "highways" and seemed to urge a compassionate ministry that by its very selflessness would "compel them to come in." Indeed, General Conference leadership created a series of "Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers," from copies of testimonies that Mrs White had made available to General Conference leadership. The passages from Isaiah and Luke were constantly used as underpinnings for the new concept of ministry Ellen White fostered throughout the denomination.

The Texts:

⁹⁶ Ellen White to "Brethren Irwin and Haskell," July 17, 1900. Special Testimonies, Vol 11 1898-1900, p 365, emphasis supplied.

⁹⁷ *Union Conference Record*, Dec 1, 1900, p 15.

⁹⁸ See July 1, 1901, p 15; March 1, 1902, pp 18-19 as examples.

Luke 4:17-21: And there was delivered unto [Jesus] the book of the prophet Isaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Isaiah 61:1-2, 6: The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;...But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God.

Isaiah 58:6-8, 10: Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward....And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day.

Luke 14:21-23: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." And the servant said, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." And the Lord said unto the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

In early 1892, not long after her arrival in Australia, Mrs White addressed the believers of the Melbourne church "with feeling and power on the subject of practical religion as taught in Isaiah 58."⁹⁹ Early in 1895, Mrs White addressed Seventh-day Adventists in general in her *Review* three-part series entitled "Followers of Christ Will Be Missionaries." She urged the membership, "We must put into practice the rules given us in Isaiah 58." She urged:

We are to work along Christ's lines....We are to be continually laboring together with Christ, seeking to turn the darkness of benighted souls into day....Every poor, tried soul needs light, needs tender, sympathizing, hopeful words. Every widow needs the comfort

⁹⁹ *Bible Echo*, April 15, 1892, p 128.

of helpful and encouraging words that others can bestow. Orphans who are lent to Christians in trust for God, are too often passed by and neglected, and yet they are bought with a price, and are just as valuable in the sight of God as we are.... When the Lord sees that you are faithful in doing what you can to relieve human misery, he will move upon others to provide means to care for those who need help. Those who enlarge their hearts in this kind of work, do no more than their duty. Christ is our example.¹⁰⁰

In her concluding article of that series Mrs White again drew upon Isaiah 58, quoting from verse six to eight, but adding her own interesting insight to verse eight: “thy righteousness shall go before thee [“the Lord our righteousness”].”¹⁰¹ A major emphasis upon the Christian Help Work in its various forms was given at the 1895 General Conference Session and the scriptural rationale was drawn from Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25:35-40 [“I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink....”].

Various reports were brought in from those who had engaged in this work in actual experience, and all of the workers spoke ardently of their love for their work, and of the good which came to them as well as the good which they were enabled to impart.¹⁰²

The Luke 14 passage speaking of going to the “highways and hedges” seems to have been a favorite Ellen White phrase. In 1896 she wrote to Australasian minister G B Starr about the importance of personal labor since “the Lord desires that the truth shall come close to the people.” Much is comprehended, she affirmed, within the command, “Go out into the hedges and highways, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” She considered that much more work along that line should be accomplished: “Let God’s workers labor for a time in the highways and hedges; let them teach the truth in families, drawing close to those for whom they labor,” Mrs White urged. “As the people see that these workers are messengers of mercy, the ministers of grace, they are ready to listen to the words spoken by them.” Mrs White claimed visionary revelation for her next portion to Elder Starr:

I saw two Bible workers seated in a family. With the open Bible before them, they presented the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour. Their words were spoken with freshness and power. Earnest prayer was offered to God, and hearts were softened and subdued by the softening influence of the Spirit of God. As the word of God was explained, I saw that a soft, radiant light illuminated the Scriptures, and I said softly, “Go ye out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be

¹⁰⁰ Ellen White, “Followers of Christ Will Be missionaries,” RH, Jan 15, 1895, p 33.

¹⁰¹ Ellen White, *Ibid*, Jan 22, 1895, p 49. Bracketed material in original.

¹⁰² G C Tenney, “General Conference Institute and Council,” RH, Feb 19, 1895, p 121.

filled.”¹⁰³

After her copyist had typed the letter, Mrs White reread it and emended the following phrase in her own handwriting after the previous sentence: “This is the compelling work that is to be done.”¹⁰⁴

Another of Ellen White’s favorite phrases as she thought about the kind of ministry she had fostered in Australasia was the phrase “helping hand.” Many of the missions established both in Australasia and the United States used that phrase as part of their mission name, as did the “Helping Hand Mission” in Melbourne, the “Helping Hand Laundry,” etc. Ellen White wrote from St Helena, California, after her return from Australia in early 1901:

I cannot sleep after half past two o’clock. I wish to speak to my brethren who occupy positions of trust. As God’s husbandry you are invested with the responsibility of acting in his stead, as his helping hand.¹⁰⁵

As she continued her reflections upon the scriptural rationale for Christian Help Work from Isaiah 58, Luke 14, Luke 4, and Isaiah 61, she linked both men and women within a ministerial context that neither the Isaian nor Lukan passages did in their time: “If men *and women* would act as the Lord’s helping hand, doing deeds of love and kindness, uplifting the oppressed, rescuing those ready to perish, the glory of the Lord would be their reward.” After quoting Luke 4:18, she affirmed: “You are not to comfort only the few whom you are inclined to regard with favor, but all that mourn, all who apply to you for help and relief; and more, you are to search for the needy.” Mrs White continued, “Wake up, wake up, my brethren and sisters. You must do the work that Christ did when he was upon this earth. Remember that you may act as God’s helping hand in opening the prison doors to those that are bound.” Mrs White here is bringing the New Testament context into the 20th century and proclaiming a vital ministry for women within that context that Christ emphasized in the first century.

Mrs White in the early twentieth century is about to shatter all past suppositions some Seventh-day Adventists may have held concerning women in ministry as she quotes from Isaiah 61:6: “Of those who act as his helping hand the Lord says, “Ye shall be named Priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God.” Here Ellen White applies to both men and women a passage from Isaiah when there were no women priests and from a time period when to be named a *priest* or *minister* referred to the special status accorded those offices through ordination.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ellen White to G B Starr, Aug 11, 1896. Special Testimonies 1850-1899, pp 2ff.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p 6.

¹⁰⁵ Ellen White, St Helena, Jan 17, 1901. Special Testimonies 1901, p 296.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p 303, emphasis supplied. See *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1986, Vol 3, article “Ordain,” p 612.

Just before beginning her Australasian ministry, Mrs White addressed the ministers at the 1891 General Conference Session in Battle Creek. She conveyed some of the contents of that address to her diary. She there provided a foretaste of the ministry she would endorse in the “new world” of Australasia:

The Lord has given Christ to the world for ministry. Merely to preach the Word is not ministry. The Lord desires His ministering servants to occupy a place worthy of the highest consideration. *In the mind of God, the ministry of men and women existed before the world was created.*¹⁰⁷

Let's consider some implications from that statement. First of all, the 1891 original did *not* contain the phrase *men and women*. That phrase was added by Ellen White in a 1903 editing of her diary, perhaps as a result of her observation and counsel concerning the ministry of women in Australasia during her own ministry there. If we accept Mrs White's premise as true, ie that God preconsidered a concept of ministry for both men and women prior to Creation, does it not destroy any premise of a lesser role for women? Does it not inherently include women within the sphere of ministry? Does it not reveal Ellen White's premise that women were indeed full-fledged ministers in the sight of God as they ministered along “Christ's own lines?”

The history of the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 19th century and Ellen White's perception of it in the early 20th century illustrates that indeed women served as *priests* and *ministers* of the Lord in her day.

¹⁰⁷ Ellen White, Diary entry Mar 12, 1891, with 1903 editing by Mrs White. Ms 23-1891, emphasis supplied.