

Route to the Ordination of Women
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ROUTE TO THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH: TWO PATHS

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I. HISTORICAL HERITAGE

INTRODUCTION

This paper will provide evidence that, in the writer's opinion, indicates that ordination of women to full gospel ministry is called for by both the historical heritage of the Seventh-day Adventist church and by the guidance of God through the ministry of Ellen G. White.

MILLERITE AND EARLY ADVENTIST HERITAGE

As part of their heritage from the Millerite movement of the 1840s, Seventh-day Adventists have, through much of their history, maintained a strong evangelistic fervor. During the Millerite experience, a variety of ministries were accepted and fostered. Such black ministers as Charles Bowles and John W. Lewis were effective preachers and welcomed within the movement. Women preachers such as Olive Maria Rice, Lucy Stoddard, Emily C. Clemens, Sarah J. Paine, Clorinda S. Minor, and a number of others, persuasively preached and published a message centering upon the soon return of Christ. L. E. Froom, historian of the movement, in evaluating the ministries of blacks and women observes, "The impression is inescapable that the movement drew men and women of unusual mentality, balance, and piety." (L. E. Froom, Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, Vol. 4, p. 708.)

Following the 1844 disappointment, however, many former leaders and members turned inward, accepted "shut door" concepts and lost their evangelistic focus. Some moved steadily into fanatical teachings and women leaders were prominent within that group. Mrs. White observed, "Elder Damon and several others were baptized many times and frequently by the hand of a woman, Mrs. Ayers, a female preacher who had drank deep of fanaticism." (Aug. 24, 1874, p. 7. MR 572.). Young, unmarried women, had explicit counsel concerning sexual matters that they felt called upon to present to men.

(Ellen White to A. T. Jones, Mar. 15, 1894.)

Although Ellen White had clearly worked against the fanatical teachings, it seemed inevitable that she, too, would become identified with the fanaticism. The result was a downplaying of Ellen White's role in the church, and an accompanying lessening of the role of women in "ministerial" functions. Ellen White's visions ceased for a period of time and she believed her work for the church might be finished. James White observed that the Review had not published an Ellen White vision between 1850 and 1855. (RH, Oct. 16, 1855.)

The Battle Creek Conferences of 1855 and 1856, however, "confess[ed] that we, as a people, have [failed to] appreciate the glorious privilege of claiming the gifts" bestowed upon Ellen White, and reaffirmed confidence in God's messages through that source. (RH, Dec. 5, 1855; July 24, 1856.) The result was a dramatic evangelistic impact in the Midwest and an accompanying elevation of the role of women in the church.

Likewise beginning in the 1850s, the ministry began to formulate defenses of Ellen White against those attacking her from outside the church. Attacks usually focused upon interpretations of the writings of Paul and questions relative to the prerogative of women to speak in church. As the defenses of Ellen White sharpened, so did the rationale for a significant role for women in the church.

B. F. Robbins wrote "To the Female Disciples in the Third Angel's Message" and reminded them that they were now in a different atmosphere than the pattern of silence called for by many of the churches they were evicted from during the Millerite period. He urged that the women develop their various gifts "designed of God for the edification of the body of Christ," and S. C. Welcome agreed with Robbins and pointed out that "it was under the

exhortations or prayers of females" that many then in Adventism became members.

Welcome continued:

We are informed on the authority of divine revelation that male and female are one in Christ Jesus; that in the relation in which they both stand to him, the distinction is as completely broken down as between Jew and Gentile, bond and free. . . . The mind of the female is certainly susceptible of all those sensibilities, affections and improvements which constitute the Christian character. . . . Experience has proved that many females have possessed the natural qualifications for speaking in public, the range of thought, the faculty of communicating their ideas in appropriate language, the sympathy with suffering humanity, a deep and lively sense of gratitude to God, and of the beauty of holiness, a zeal for the honor of God, and the happiness of his rational creatures--all these are found among the female part of the human family, as frequently and as eminently as among the men. Then let no stumbling-block be thrown in their way, but let them fill the place that God calls them to fill, let them not be bound down to silence by church rules. (Robbins, RH, Dec. 8, 1859, p. 22; Welcome, "Shall the Women Keep Silence in the Churches?" RH, Feb. 23, 1860, p. 110.)

As the early SDA church struggled with formative concepts of organization and the issuing of credentials to its ministry, some opposed such actions on the basis that there seemed no explicit Biblical precedent for such policies.

James White commented:

But if it be asked, Where are your plain texts of scripture for holding church property legally? we reply, The Bible does not furnish any; neither does it say that we should have a weekly paper, a steam printing-press, that we should publish books, build places of worship, and send out tents. Jesus says, "Let your light so shine before men," etc.; but he does not give all the particulars how this shall be done. The church is left to move forward in the great work, praying for divine guidance, acting upon the most efficient plans for its accomplishment. We believe it safe to be governed by the following

RULE

All means which, according to sound judgment, will advance the cause of truth, and are not forbidden by plain scripture declarations, should be employed. (James White, RH, July 21, 1859, p. 68; and April 26, 1860, p. 180. Emphasis supplied.)

HUSBAND-WIFE MINISTRIES

It appears that the first type of ministry actively involving women in the SDA church was as a member of a husband-wife evangelistic team. A number of such teams functioned throughout the 1860s and 70s. James White describes

a typical team effort as follows:

Iowa seems to be a very encouraging field of labor. . . . The way is open for Bro. Cornell to labor successfully in this part of the State. Sister Cornell has well acted her part. The mode of warfare is something as follows: Bro. Cornell goes out alone into a new place, perhaps puts up at the tavern, preaches a few days, when friends appear to invite him to their houses; and when the work is well under way, sister C[ornell] joins her husband, and labors from house to house as they are invited. And when Bro. Cornell's work is done, it is a good place for sister C[ornell] to remain and defend the truth in private conversations, and bear responsibilities of the work in the midst of young disciples. In this way both can bear a part in the good work, which will bring a glorious reward in the next kingdom. (James White, RH, March 8, 1860, p. 124.)

The nature of SDA ministry in the 19th century must be seen within the perspective that no SDA churches, even to the end of the century, had stationary ministers. The focus was primarily upon evangelization rather than "pastoring." As in the case with the Cornell methodology, so we will find generally throughout most of the century, the woman partner in the husband-wife team came the closest in the 19th century to what we would consider "pastoral" ministry.

James White considered the ministry of the woman important:

My views and feelings are that the minister's wife stands in so close a relation to the work of God, a relation which so affects him for better or worse, that she should, in the ordination prayer, be set apart as his helper. (RH, Aug. 13, 1867, p. 136.)

107 YEARS OF TESTING: THE LICENSING OF WOMEN SDA MINISTERS

The 17th annual session of the General Conference, held in Battle Creek, Michigan, commencing Oct. 4, 1878, was proclaimed by the Review to be the "largest gathering of Christian Sabbath-keepers ever assembled in this country." Among the resolutions adopted by that session was the following:

RESOLVED, That those who apply for a license to preach the third angel's message, should, before they receive a license, be examined by a competent committee in regard to their doctrinal and educational qualifications. (RH, Oct. 17, 1878, pp. 122, 124.)

The "license to preach" or "ministerial license" was taken very seriously by the denomination since it was seen as the route to full ordination and reception of ministerial credentials. Perhaps it was taken even more seriously in 1878 since earlier that year Mrs. E. S. Lane had received such a "preacher's license" from the Michigan Conference. Her license had been renewed Oct. 7 during the Michigan Conference meetings on the very campground where the GC session was being held. It appears that Mrs. Lane was the first woman to hold the ministerial license. Following the session, however, Julia Owen would receive a similar license from the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference. Both women were wives of ordained ministers and both had indicated a marked "calling" to ministerial labor. (RH, Oct. 17, 1878, p. 127, and Nov. 14, 1878, p. 158.)

Kansas and Minnesota joined the list of conferences licensing women in 1879 and Illinois issued licenses to Helen Morse and Ida Ballenger in 1881. Thus, by the time of the General Conference Session of 1881, five conferences had issued ministerial licenses to ten different women ministers. At the time of the 1881 Session, at least seven women were then holding those licenses. (Information gleaned by checking all conference proceedings listed in the RH between 1877 and 1881.)

Ellen White actively involved herself in the examinations that occurred prior to the issuing of licenses and she attended many of the conference proceedings where ministerial licenses were issued to women. At the Kansas Conference proceedings of 1879, the committee on credentials and licenses made their initial report after which it was observed, "Sister White spoke at some length on the subject of licenses." At the afternoon meeting, the committee submitted further report that contained ten additional names, including that of Hattie Enoch. The next year in Oregon, Mrs. White observed that she had met with various licentiate applicants and that she had recommended that some

not receive license. (RH, June 12, 1879, p. 190; W32a, June 14, 1880.)

Phase two of the licensing process begun in 1878 occurred at the 1881 GC Session. Two resolutions seem pertinent to the question of the ordination of women:

RESOLVED, That all candidates for license and ordination should be examined with reference to their intellectual and spiritual fitness for the successful discharge of the duties which will devolve upon them as licentiates and ordained ministers.

RESOLVED, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry. (RH, Dec. 20, 1881, p. 392.)

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

Various issues concerning licensing, ordination, and general policies were discussed at the 1884 and 1885 GC Sessions and resulted in the 1886 publication of "The Church: Its Organization, Ordinances, and Discipline," by J. H. Waggoner. He observed:

The Conferences always give licentiates to understand that the first giving of a license is only a trial. . . . By giving him a license [however,] they strengthen his conviction that it [is] his duty to preach. (p. 19.)

Waggoner cited policy to note that the license did not authorize the licentiate to celebrate the ordinances, to administer baptism, or to organize a church. He also pointed to an 1884 GC action forbidding licentiates from

solemnizing marriages. It is interesting to note that a number of state legislatures did allow licensed ministers to perform the marriage ceremony, but the issue apparently never came to a question of court resolution in the 19th century. (Ibid., pp. 48, 51.)

The ministry continued to be upgraded through the 1870s and into the 1880s and women continued to be licensed by local conferences. At the 1887 GC Session, the General Conference implemented what had been done at the local conference level nine years earlier when it licensed Mrs. Ruie Hill and Mrs. Hattie Enoch to serve in General Conference mission areas within the United States. (1887 GC Session Reports, pp. 16-7.)

What about those licensed? Were they indeed really ministers?

Obviously the local conference records would tell us a great deal about the nature of the score or so licensed SDA women ministers of the 19th century if those local conference records had been preserved. (See appendix for listing of women licensed as SDA ministers in the 19th century.) A happy exception is the records of the New York Conference and we shall look in detail at one of the licensed women ministers from that state. A brief glimpse at two of the earliest licensed ministers, however, is beneficial.

G. I. Butler observed that Smith Sharp, president of the Kansas Conference, was making full use of licentiates there, especially in personal-type revival ministry. Butler observed to Ellen White:

Among these are Marshall Enoch and his wife who is a public speaker and who labors with her husband. Elder Cook [Kansas minister, soon to become president of the conference] thinks she is a better laborer in such things than any minister in the State. (Butler to Ellen White, May 24, 1881, Butler, G. I. 1880-81 WE.)

After about 15 years ministry in the United States, Elder and Mrs. Enoch pioneered the work in Bermuda.

Butler observed that there were other "promising Licentiates coming up"

in Kansas and mentioned "a young lady, a Presbyterian, a school teacher, who was candidate for County Superintendent of Common School," as one prospect.

(Ibid.)

Mrs. Ellen Lane began her ministerial experience during her husband's ministry in Ohio. Initially assisting him during a time of illness, Mrs. Lane attained increasing proficiency as a speaker. Together with J. O. Corliss they pioneered the work in Tennessee. Mrs. Lane was licensed in Michigan when they returned to that state. There were times when each carried on separate evangelistic meetings and that was the case when Elder E. B. Lane died in 1881. Mrs. Lane continued an extremely effective ministry as a licensed minister until 1889.

ALTERNATIVE TO CENTRALIZATION

In the late 1870s, Ellen White began to observe centralizing tendencies within the Tract and Missionary organization and tendencies within the church in general to allow "one man's mind and one man's judgment" to become a determining factor in decisionmaking. (Ellen White to Stephen Haskell, Oct. 29, 1880, H55, 1880; Ellen White to James White, W49, 1880.) The result, Ellen White affirmed, was a lessening of the spiritual life within the churches. She would make similar observations during the 1890s. Her solution during the late 1870s and early 1880s was for a more "pastoral" personalized ministry that more directly involved women. Her solution in the 1890s would be similar.

In early 1879, Mrs. White urged:

Women can be the instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. . . . If there were twenty women where now there is one . . . we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth. . . . Zealous and continued diligence in our sisters toiling for the spread of the truth would be wholly successful, and would astonish us with its results. (RH, Jan. 2, 1879, p. 1.)

Mrs. White focused upon another phase of ministry that she would again focus upon in the 1890s:

We are lacking in deeds of sympathy and benevolence, in sacred and social ministering to the needy, the oppressed, and the suffering. Women who can work are needed now, women who are not self-important, but meek and lowly of heart, who will work with the meekness of Christ wherever they can find work to do for the salvation of souls. (Ibid.)

She wrote Haskell, "I tell you there must be more visiting the churches and caring for those already raised up" and groped toward a new concept of ministry, "There are needed not only ministers, but those who can act as missionaries,--men and women of good understanding, of moral worth with moral backbone who can circulate around among the people and shed light, precious light everywhere." (To Haskell, Jan. 27, 1879, H1, 1879; to Willie and Mary White, Feb. 20, 1879, W15, 1879.)

When she saw a tendency for an elder in a local church to "dictate and control matters" to the detriment of the sisters within that church, Ellen White strongly observed:

It is not always men who are best adapted to the successful management of a church. If faithful women have more deep piety and true devotion than men, they could indeed by their prayers and their labors do more than men who are unconsecrated in heart and in life. (J33, 1879.)

She went on to make the broad observation that the "dictatorial spirit" present in that local church, was a general weakness in churches and felt "grieved for the people of God." While burdened with such deep feeling, Mrs. White preached to a congregation at the Oregon campmeeting a message that she considered a response to such a need. The message from Isaiah 58 would be the focus of much of her ministry in Australia during the 1890s.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY AND THE NEW YORK EXPERIENCE

In 1900, G. B. Thompson, president of the New York Conference, wrote to a prospective candidate for a ministerial license:

It is not the general custom of the conference to take on workers and place them on a salary from the first when they wish to work in ministerial lines, but they are usually asked to go out first on a somewhat self-supporting basis and develop their gift in that direction and show by bringing in some fruit of their work that they have a call in this direction, and then the conference, if they show a call to that work, is willing to take them on and give them some [financial] help. (Thompson to Brother Sands, Apr. 13, 1900, NYC 11 Bk., p. 125.)

Mrs. Lulu Wightman provided such tangible evidence of her "call" to gospel ministry. Indeed, the results from her evangelism would rank her not only as the most outstanding evangelist in New York State during her time, but among the most successful within the denomination for any time period. As a licensed minister, Mrs. Wightman pioneered work that established companies or churches in a number of places in New York State where Adventism had never gained a foothold before. Between 1896 and 1905, Mrs. Wightman raised up churches in Hornellsville, Gas Springs, Wallace, Silver Creek, Geneva, Angola, Gorham, Fredonia, Avoca, Rushville, Canandaigua, and Penn Yan. After her husband was licensed in 1903, they jointly established churches in Avon, Lakeville, Hemlock, South Livonia and Bath.

The ministry of Mrs. Wightman was rich and can be methodologically pursued at length merely by reading the local newspapers in places where she held evangelistic meetings. The Gorham, New York, New Era reported:

Mr. and Mrs. Wightman, who have been here about eight months, preaching and working in the interests of the S. D. Adventists, left for Rushville on Monday, where they will locate and do missionary work in their cause, and in connection look after the flock here. During their residence here these people have made many friends and have converted some to their religion, and their departure is regretted by many for even did not agree with their views, as they were intelligent, social, and good citizens. They will probably return next summer when they can preach in the tent. (Cited in New York Indicator[NYI], Jan. 31, 1900.)

Mrs. Wightman had married a former newspaper editor who worked with her without ministerial pay for seven years. He received some remuneration from colporteur work. Lulu Wightman was sister of K. C. and E. T. Russell, both of whom were prominent workers within the denomination.

A study of Mrs. Wightman is especially useful to an analysis of a history of women's ministry because the records of the New York Conference during the 1890s and early 1900s have been preserved. Such a study is also useful because her husband was quite articulate and, on at least one occasion, discussed the issue of ordination. While that issue was obviously one that was often discussed privately, women themselves appear not to have openly discussed it.

Mrs. Wightman's initial experience in seeking ministerial labor provides an interesting variation to the usual policy in the 19th century. Since she was considered the finest singer in the New York Conference, she was offered some remuneration if she labored in tent meetings during 1896, but her husband could receive no conference remuneration. The greatly depressed financial situation of the 1890s made new paid ministries very tenuous. Instead of focusing upon music at camp meetings, however, Mrs. Wightman, with assistance from her husband, established churches at Hornellsville and Gas Springs during that year.

The next year, S. M. Cobb, who had ministered in New York State since 1884, wrote this to the conference president:

I say as I have said all the time in reference to Sr. Lulu Wightman, that a good lady worker will accomplish as much good as the best men we have got, and I am more and more convinced that it is so. Look at Sr. Lulu W.'s work; she has accomplished more the last two years than any minister in this state, and yet the Conf. has held her off arms length, and refused to recognize her as a suitable person to present the truth, when in fact she was out of sight of the very ones that opposed her, in point of ability (you know who I mean). . . .

I am also in favor of giving license to Sr. Lulu Wightman to preach, and believe that there is no reason why she should not receive it, and if Bro. W. is a man of ability and works with his wife and promises to make a successful laborer, I am in favor of giving him license also. (S. M. Cobb to A. E. Place, Aug. 6, 1897. NYC 11, 1897 incoming.)

Mrs. Wightman's ministry was temporarily delayed for several months in 1897. Despite the birth of her daughter, Ruth, in August of that year, Mrs.

Wightman received ministerial license at the New York Conference proceedings of Sept. 10. She commenced meetings in Avoca, New York, on Nov. 11.

At Avoca, Mrs. Wightman was confronted with attacks that were often made upon SDA women ministers in the 19th century, when one of the ministers from the area observed that Paul "suffers not a woman to teach." Mrs. Wightman's husband responded by citing Scriptural evidence for women's ministry and by citing the evidence of observation:

The fact that men and women are converted to God through the preaching of women should suffice. . . . It is high time for women to begin to preach the word and that the Lord is with them in power and might may be perceived by all who are not looking through smoked glass. (John S. Wightman to S. W. Pratt, copy, Dec. 15, 1897. NYC 11, 1897 incoming.)

The ministry of the Wightmans in New York State illustrates the necessity of the 19th century church of constantly choosing between an evangelistic ministry and a "pastoral" ministry. The most successful means of dealing with that problem and also the problem of a small paid ministry seemed to be the husband-wife ministerial team. Their ministry, however, illustrates a variation in the usual situation in a number of ways. While both had strong evangelistic leanings, it is apparent that Mrs. Wightman was the more effective evangelist. Note her concept of ministry:

Wallace had not ought to be deserted just now, but as evangelists we ought to be moving on. Moving on is what does the work.

We don't like the idea of going to the churches too much. We prefer getting right into new fields. (Lulu Wightman to A. E. Place, Jan. 27, 1898 and S. H. Lane, Nov. 1, 1904. NYC 11, 1898 and 1904 incoming.)

Mrs. Wightman used evangelistic methodology with broadsides, flyers, newspaper advertisements. She usually advertised herself as a "Bible evangelist." Her commitment to evangelism was such that she tried to leave companies of believers even in out-of-state places where she "vacationed" for health reasons. She purposely choose places where churches were not established.

The following two snatches of correspondence illustrate the nature and irony of the Wightman ministry. The first item is addressed to Mrs. Wightman's husband by the president of the New York Conference and the second illustrates the full scope of her ministry:

Enclosed find a small token of appreciation from the Conference Committee for your work in assisting your wife [emphasis supplied].

Sister Wightman is one of the active laborers of the New York Conference, and has labored successfully for several years in the field as a minister in tent work in the summer and in halls, etc. in the winter. (G. B. Thompson to John Wightman, Aug. 13, 1901 and Dear Brother, Jan. 30, 1902. NYC 11 Bk., pp. 450, 518.)

John Wightman was licensed as a minister in 1903, some six years after his wife. He was ordained in 1905. It was in 1903 that the General Conference statistical secretary began to make close observations about local conference reports. He noted that in New York State, 60% of the new members joining the church entered as the result of the efforts of "two licensed ministers" (the Wightmans) and one Bible worker (Mrs. D. D. Smith). At the time, the New York Conference had eleven ministers and two Bible workers.

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

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

continued, the \$9 is still as fitting under the circumstances as before. (John Wightman to S. H. Lane, Sept. 2, 1904. NYC 11, 1904 incoming.)

It should be observed that Underwood had just served a term as president of District No. 1 [becoming the Eastern Union at the 1901 GC reorganization]. In effect, according to Wightman, the General Conference president and the local conference president opposed the ordination of Mrs. Wightman. It would appear that the presence of A. G. Daniells at the New York Conference in 1901 was more from accident than by design. The former "union" president "and others" "strongly" disagreed with the premise that the time, 1901, was inopportune for ordaining a woman.

Although that ended his discussion of ordination, Wightman, in his letter, continued to oppose the injustice of the request for a salary reduction:

I do not think that any will deny that we are doing the work of two ordained ministers. Certainly we bring the people fully into the truth and can do everything except that which man sees fit to not privilege-- the right to organize churches. But every person can recognize our ability to do even that, in itself a very small part of the work indeed. We commenced work together May 1, 1896. . . . The fact of the accident of relationship should not bar one from the compensation that is earned by diligent work and unselfish activity. . . . We may be denied ordination in spite of all success, but ought not to have added to this the denial of a just and reasonable compensation. . . . I have written these things for your own private consideration. (Ibid.)

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

Yesterday a resolution was adopted in the House of Representatives inviting Mrs. Wightman to address the representatives in the House of Representatives chamber on "The Rise of Religious Liberty in the United States." I believe this action upon the part of the Missouri legislature is unprecedented in the history of our people. (John S. Wightman, "Sunday Legislation Defeated," Missouri Workers' Record, April 28, 1909.)

Tragically, the Wightmans would come to a point where they no longer felt comfortable within the ministry and membership of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The issue of women's ministry would, however, receive its greatest

impetus from the one in whom they came to lose confidence, Ellen White.

II. ELLEN WHITE AND THE MINISTRY OF COMPASSION

Ellen White was mourning the death of her husband in 1881 when she wrote her son, "I am fully of the opinion that my life was so entwined or interwoven with my husband's that it is about impossible for me to be of any great account without him." In a vision shortly thereafter, her husband seemed to tell her this:

We might have done a great deal for years with our pens, on subjects the people need that we have had light upon and can present before them, which others do not have. Thus you can work when your strength returns, as it will, and you can do far more with your pen than with your voice. (Ellen White to W. C. White, Sept. 12, 1881. W17, 1881. MR 191, 781.)

In 1895, Ellen White took her pen and wrote the following:

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. (RH, July 9, 1895, p. 434.)

However one interprets the statement, it must be perceived as a "bombshell" since women apparently had not been formally ordained to any type of work prior to that time. (That is, unless one interprets James White's policy of "setting apart" the wife "in the ordination prayer" as full ordination.) The 1976 edition of the SDA Encyclopedia reads:

Since in the New Testament there is no record of deaconesses having been ordained, they are not ordained in the SDA Church. (Article "Deaconess," p. 379)

Not until 1984 was a similar statement deleted from the SDA Church Manual.

The remainder of this paper is devoted to the contextual setting of Ellen White's significant 1895 statement concerning ordination of women.

THE AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND MODEL

"I dreaded to come to Australia," Ellen White told those present at the Napier, New Zealand, campmeeting in 1893. She decided to go, however, because

of her conviction that she would have a special work there and that work concerned the nature of "ministry." (W. C. White, Notes and Memoranda of Napier, N.Z., Campmeeting, March 22-April 5, 1893, WE.)

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. W. 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. (Ellen White to Mrs. Jennie L. Ings, Aug. 4, 1894, I36, 1894; to J. H. Kellogg, Jan. 6, 1899, 7ST, 1898-99; W. C. White to Dr. F. T. Lamb, Aug. 23, 1899, WCW bk. 13, p. 512.)

A hint of the pattern of evangelism that would be developed in the Australian model was presented to Ellen White in a dream September 29, 1886, which she described as follows:

I dreamed that I was walking with a large company of men and some women. We were looking to find fruit of some kind to gather. . . . There were many young men and women in the company to help in the work of gathering the fruit. We seemed to be in a city. . . . [I told the workers] the Lord has placed these fruit-bearing bushes right in the midst of those thickly settled places, and he expects you to find them, . . . but you have thought more of the supplies than of the fruit you were to bring as the result of your labors. (Address of E. G. White at Basle, Switzerland, March 7, 1887. 10 Special Testimonies, 1899-1900, pp. 183-85.)

It was in late 1894 and throughout 1895 that Ellen White was focusing upon a ministry that would respond to the needs of those living in cities. W. C. White made the following notation from Mrs. White's talk at a worker's meeting following the Ashfield campmeeting on Oct. 30, 1894:

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. (W. C. White, Notes of Ashfield Campmeeting, Oct. 19-30, 1894, WE.)

City evangelism brought the problems of the 19th century Adventist ministry

into sharp focus. O. A. Olsen, GC president, succinctly stated the dilemma, "A minister should not be located with a church, nor should a new company be left a long time alone." The dimensions of the work to be done in evangelism did not allow for a stationary "pastorate" that could shepherd a church, yet, churches needed pastoring. (O. A. Olsen, Statement Feb. 18, 1894, at 8th Meeting of Australasian Union Conference Committee.)

Ellen White likewise saw the dilemma as she observed that the prospect of work before the church "in the fields of labor yet untouched, is without a limit. . . . The churches need care and encouragement, yet our work must largely be to lift the standard in new fields." Perhaps reflecting upon her vision of 1886, she wrote to workers in America:

We see so many places to be worked, and in the name of the Lord we call for workers, earnest workers, for this [Australia] field. We do not ask for men who are wedded to their own ways, but for those who are wedded to Christ and his ways. We pray that there will be men and women who will be stirred by the Spirit of the Lord to come to this country to settle in different places, and work, and have a holding influence. We need you, O so much we need you. (Ellen White, "Words of Gratitude," April 11, 1899. ST 1899.)

It was a "ministry of compassion" that Ellen White believed would be the best solution to the dilemma of 19th century ministry and also be the means of bringing Adventism into the cities. It was working in "Christ's own lines," "working as he worked," ministering to the needs of others. It was the outworking of the plan of salvation: "love awakens love." It was the consequence of the new focus upon "Christ and the gospel" sounding more clearly within the church since 1888 and it came at the very time Mrs. White was completing her major book on Christ, The Desire of Ages. Mrs. White observed, "It is no light or easy work to save souls," as she pleaded for a ministry of compassion. She wrote her son:

Yesterday it all opened before me that in this very line of hospitality, I have been repeatedly shown that we can unite the people with us, and can have twofold influence over them. This was unfolded

before me in the first experience in this work, many years back, and we have ever linked our interest with humanity. (Ellen White to Jennie L. Ings, Aug. 4, 1894, I36, 1894; Ellen White to W. C. White, Aug. 6, 1894, W135, 1894.)

ELLEN WHITE AS "PASTOR"

In late 1894 and early 1895, Mrs. White, in addition to her work in finishing Desire of Ages, in writing personal testimonies, giving public addresses, etc., served, in a sense, as a local pastor of the Kellyville, Prospect, and Parramatta, N.S.W., churches. It seemed inevitable, for she observed that her "whole theme both in the pulpit and in private, by voice and pen, is the life of Christ." One non-Adventist, after hearing Mrs. White speak publicly, stated:

I never heard such preaching as that woman gave us since I was born into the world. These people make Christ the complete center and system of truth. (Ellen White to J. H. Kellogg, Oct. 25, 1894, K46a, 1894; Ellen White to O. A. Olsen, Oct. 26, 1894, O56, 1894.)

A major thrust of Mrs. White's pastoral care involved her warfare against the severe economic hardships brought about by the depressed economic conditions in Australia. "We cannot with our wills sway back the wave of poverty which is sweeping over this country," she observed, "but just as far as the Lord shall provide us with means, we shall break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free." (To Kellogg, Oct. 25, 1894, K46a, 1894.) She carried a heavy burden for those around her who had recently embraced Adventism and begged for funds to sustain the needy both within and without the church. Her heart melted as she related the following experience:

One of our family came to me saying that a boy about fifteen years old was at the door with a small basket of apples and oranges, for which he asked one shilling, twenty four cents. He was told that we had a supply of this fruit; for we buy at auction. He pleaded with the girl to buy, for, said he, "We are starving." The question was asked, "Where is your father? Cannot he get work?" He said sorrowfully, "My father is dead. My mother is in poor health. . . . I am the eldest of the family, and the responsibility is upon me. Won't you buy?" [In her plea for assistance, Mrs. White continued] You cannot know how we carry the heavy burden as we see these

souls tested, thrown out of employment, unable to obtain labor unless they will give up the Sabbath. We must comfort and encourage them; we must help them as they shall be brought into strait places. There are many souls as precious as gold, and every sinner saved causes rejoicing in the heavenly courts. We cannot see how we can do otherwise than write to California for means, or ask any one in America who has means to help us. (Ellen White to Brother Harper, July 8, 1894, H30a, 1894.)

The situation was overwhelming to Mrs. White as she responded in her ministry of compassion. "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," she urged. She was "pressed beyond measure with the work of writing out testimonies, caring for the poor, and traveling" the eight, eleven and thirteen miles to care for the churches in New South Wales. She had no alternative:

Dollars and dollars I have to expend to provide food for the hungry, and clothing for those too poor to buy. But they are God's property. They have newly come to the faith; they are God's chosen children. (Ellen White to Brother Harper, March 7, 1895, H31b, 1895; Ellen White to Representative Men, "Oct. 1, 1894, 3ST 1893-94; Ellen White to H. W. Kellogg, Oct. 24, 1894, K42, 1894.)

She wrote the GC president in April of 1895 that she had "never done more earnest labor working for the churches than the past year" and had no feelings of guilt in accepting her salary for that year. She continued:

And in addition to all the labor mentioned, there have been private Testimonies very taxing to me, and also another class of labor, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, invest money to employ laborers. I am at the present time paying nineteen dollars per week for workers in Ashfield, Petersham, Canterbury, and the suburbs about Sydney. So you see there has not in any period of my labors been so strong a draft upon my financial and spiritual resources as at the present. (Ellen White to O. A. Olsen, April 12, 1895, ST 1899-1903, p. 361.)

THE BATTLE CREEK CONTRAST

In 1895, O. A. Olsen, president of the General Conference illustrated the organizational dilemma faced by his office in the following words:

At the present time I am, as I said to some of the brethren the other day, like a man that is in water too deep for him to touch the ground, and I am struggling to get hold of something that will enable me to keep

my head above water, and save me from drowning; but it seems as though every time I raise my head above the surface, I receive a thump that sends me back again, and with a few thumps more I shall be under the surface, and remain there. So that the facts in this matter are that it is just about a struggle for life with me. (O. A. Olsen to C. H. Jones, July 22, 1895. RG 11, bk. 14, p. 786.)

Olsen didn't inaugurate the policies that called for most matters to be resolved at Battle Creek. In 1888, Ellen White wrote George Butler, then serving as president, "I cannot sanction the idea that you must have a personal oversight of all the details of the work," and she had made similar warnings a number of times in the past. Nevertheless, the question of centralization at Battle Creek was a major question in the mid-1890s and it is significant that Ellen White recopied many older testimonies warning about this tendency and issued from Australia a number of current warnings against such concepts. In January of 1896, she wrote:

In every neighborhood, consecrated ability will do much in personal effort; but let not men prescribe for their brethren according to their ideas. Let the oppression of human minds forever cease, and let the Holy Spirit have a chance to work. (Ellen White to Brethren Who Occupy Responsible Positions in the Work, Jan. 16, 1896, Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers, No. 6, p. 23; Ellen White, "The Need of Divine Guidance," Oct. 1, 1888, Recopied and send from Australia, Feb. 7, 1895, Ibid., p. 58.)

It was in 1895 and 1896, during the time of her focus upon a new "ministry" for the church, that Ellen White issued her strongest statements opposing the "arbitrary authority, in domineering, in oppression, in restricting the liberty of God's people, binding them about by your plans and rules, which God has not framed" that she saw in Battle Creek. Decisions made at Battle Creek had resulted in funds being appropriated to large building enterprises that should have gone for "deeds of mercy," to the "poor and suffering" in "new fields, where the standard of truth has never yet been uplifted." (Ellen White, Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers, No. 9, pp. 14, 68.)

Centralization in decision-making authority resulted in an alienation

between the ministerial and medical branches of the work at the time when their need of unity was greatest because of the need for a new "ministry." The result of the disunity brought about a "centralized" focus on the part of the medical workers and, in the end, caused the medical and evangelistic branches to march separately. Ellen White was looking for a medical ministry that knew how to work compassionately, following the methods of Jesus, in presenting the plan of salvation to the deprived.

In the mid 1890s, Ellen White was warning against administrative centralization that was alienating Kellogg and the medical work. By the end of the 1890s, she was warning against monolithic control of the medical work by Kellogg. Ellen White's concepts obviously drew their origin from 1 Corinthians 12 and she constantly referred to that chapter during the time. She wrote:

I wish to speak about the relation existing between the medical missionary work and the gospel ministry. . . . The ministry of the gospel is to represent the truth which must be received in order for people to be sanctified and made ready for the coming of the Lord. And this work is to embrace all that was embraced in Christ's ministry. . . .

There is to be no division between the ministry and the medical missionary work. The physician should labor equally with the minister and with as much earnestness and thoroughness for the salvation of the soul as well as for the restoration of the body. . . . It is just as much a physician's duty to prepare the souls before him for what is to take place [Lord's return, judgment, etc.] as to minister to their physical needs. . . . The gospel ministry is an organization for the proclamation of the truth and the carrying forward of the work for sick and well. . . .

The Saviour has bound together the work of preaching the truth and healing the sick; and we are never to divorce them. Christ blended ministry and healing, and there is to be no more separation in our work than there was in his. There is to be no division between the medical missionary work and the gospel ministry. (Ellen White, "Medical Missionary Work and the Gospel Ministry," Talk at Battle Creek Sanitarium Chapel, Nov. 13, 1900, ST, 1900, pp. 144-47.)

In pleading for a unified concept of ministry, Mrs. White wrote:

The work that is done to relieve suffering humanity is of more value to [Dr. Kellogg] than a world of gold. He has gathered in all the outcasts he can that they may be uplifted, and reform, and see God as their Restorer. God approves of his work in this line. Let the brethren appreciate this work. Christ is still saying, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The greatest missionary work that can be done in our world is work in ministerial lines combined with the medical missionary work.

(Ellen White to Elders Irwin, Prescott, Waggoner, and Jones, Feb. 21, 1899, 8 ST, 1898-99, p. 315.)

Privately, however, Ellen White was warning Kellogg to "break up your consolidated mass," as she saw him "extending the arms of power at Battle Creek more and more widely." She warned against his "seeking to control the whole work far and near, and crush out that which you cannot control." "I lift my voice in protest," she warned. (Ellen White to J. H. Kellogg, July 15, 1895. K45, 1895.)

The parallels to the centralization of the 1870s and 1880s was noted by Ellen White and she referred to the centralization within the Tract and Missionary work that eventuated in that branch absorbing "every other interest." "Dearth and spiritual death in the churches was the result," observed Ellen White. Just as in that earlier period Mrs. White sought a broader concept of ministry, one that sought to bring women more within that category, so did she react in the 1890s. (Ellen White to J. H. Kellogg, c. 1893, copied 1899. ST bk 9, p. 273.)

RULES VERSUS NEW MINISTRIES

As Ellen White was considering means of bringing the gospel to the cities of Australia, her son told her of the dire financial condition of the denomination in Australia. When she suggested appealing to the General Conference for funds, W. C. White informed her that organized conferences were to be self-supporting. "I do not know your rules, nor regulations," she told her son, "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." A few days earlier she had written:

The leaven of activity needs to be introduced that our church members may work along new lines, and devise new methods. (W. C. White to Foreign Mission Board, Feb. 20, 1895. WCW bk 7, p. 191; Ellen White, "Activity in

Our Churches," Feb. 2, 1895, Special Testimony to Ministers and Workers, No. 3, p. 35.)

J. O. Corliss, perhaps more than anyone else, developed the evangelistic methodologies used in Australia and New Zealand during 1894 and 1895. Corliss had been among those who initially pioneered the establishment of Adventism in Australia a decade earlier. Significantly, Corliss was clearly identified with the issue of women's ministry in the church. He was with the Whites in many of the campmeetings when women were first licensed and had spoken to the issue at the 1881 GC Session.

The gospel focus of 1888, with its emphasis upon Christ as the center of all denominational activity, impacted upon evangelistic methodologies. Note W. C. White's description of both the content and methodology of evangelism in Australia:

In counselling over the matter before the meetings started the brethren had decided to present all phases of the truth as it is "in Jesus." I do not think there was a single, what we have designated as a doctrinal discourse preached. Even in the Bible readings Christ has been held up as in all, through all, and the All.

The result is that people tell us that we do not, cannot know or understand the wonderful and complete revolution in the feelings of the people toward us and our work. . . .

The heaviest burden of the preaching has fallen upon Elders Prescott and Corliss. . . . We know not whether to rejoice more over the light and blessing our own people are receiving, or over the outside interest and the souls the Lord is giving us. (W. C. White to Brethren, Nov. 21, 1895. WCW bk, pp. 458-59.)

I will now ask you to consider the way in which most of our young ministers are trained [in the United States]. . . . After they have brought out a little company of Sabbath keepers, an older minister or an officer of the Conference is sent for, who comes to finish up the work, organize the church, instruct them in many points that the young man has left untouched; and he is permitted to go on to new territory. . . .

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 [and women--WCW should have stated] 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 Bren. Semmons and Pallant from the work of distribution, that they may spend their entire energies in holding readings. . . . The preaching and

the house to house work go hand in hand. . . . Last Sunday morning Elder 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 were 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. (W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, Aug. 20, 1895. WCW bk. 8, pp. 113-14.)

Corliss, in developing his question-answer-type Bible readings, duplicated those readings and made them available to the participants, thus greatly enhancing interest. His methods embraced far more a teaching than preaching methodology. His evangelistic "team," with regular reports from the team members, is described by W. C. White:

You may have heard of the plans we have been working on here in Sydney and in Auckland. The minister who has had 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 all are invited, also church officers, leading brethren and sisters, and persons who are becoming interested in the truth 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 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. (W. C. White to D. A. Robinson, Sept. 10, 1895. WCW bk. 8, pp. 205-06.)

It is interesting to note that of the 17 members of Corliss' Sydney evangelistic "team" who reported their activities there, 8 were women.

Before he left Australia for the United States in 1896, J. O. Corliss performed one further action that may well have been a first in denominational history when he participated in the organization of the Perth SDA Church on April 11, 1896. Corliss ordained B. Larwood as deaconess of the Perth Church. (W. C. White to Members of Australasian Union Conference Committee, July 15, 1896. WCW bk. 10, p. 195.)

"PRAISE GOD FOR ADVERSITY"

As he contemplated the innovations developed in Australia brought about in part because of the strained financial situation, W. C. White exclaimed, "Praise

God for adversity." One such innovation involved A. W. Semmens.

Semmens had been trained at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, graduated from the nurse's course and was prepared to enter denominational work in the Christian Help Work ministry. Through failure in communication, however, Kellogg sent him to Australia at a time when there were no funds to support him. Semmens' initial style of work is described by A. G. Daniells:

I think that we should give his line of work careful study and then use him to the very best advantage. The other night when I came from the city about ten o'clock, I met him and his wife going down to spend the night among the wretched people in Little Bourke St. I was real pleased to see this, and I think that we ought to make use of people who have the energy to push out like this. They seem to think there is an excellent opening here for the line of work they have been doing in Chicago, and that with the knowledge they have they can work to much greater advantage than those who are trying to do rescue work in this city. (A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, May 11, 1894. WCW bk. 4, p. 363.)

Semmens and his wife were placed on the Conference payroll and their ministry expanded to include instructing the various churches in Christian Help Work ministry, working in that ministry at campmeetings, and, after receiving instruction from J. O. Corliss, engaging in the Bible work. The molding of the Australian situation thus resulted in A. W. Semmens developing into what was then called a "medical evangelist." He became a licensed minister in 1895. W. C. White described the background to the ministry of the two medical missionaries in Australia:

Mother and I have felt an earnest desire that the Health and Temperance principles should be taught in all the churches, and that the Health work in its various branches should be built up. We wrote to the Foreign Mission Board, and to Dr. Kellogg, regarding help, and while endeavoring to decide whether we should ask for one laborer, or two, two were furnished us, in Dr. M. G. Kellogg, and Bro. A. W. Semmens. These brethren have employed a portion of their time for the last two years, in evangelistic work, and a portion of their time in Teaching H[earth] and T[emperance] principles in our churches, in caring for the sick in the church, and outside the church, and in the various lines of Christian Help Work. Our brethren and sisters in our largest churches, have had the labors of both of these brn. (W. C. White to Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association, June 7, 1896. WCW bk. 10, p. 43.)

Obviously the nature of the work done by Semmens was seen as justification

for his receiving the ministerial "license to preach," but it was a different kind of ministry that had been anticipated by J. H. Kellogg and the difference caused strained relations between Kellogg and Australia. W. C. White describes the differing philosophies:

I think I will state briefly a few principles which have been burned into my memory by our experiences in America, and the discussions that have arisen over them; also by the messages of counsel that we have received from time to time from the Lord.

1. We have been taught by the example of Christ and by the Testimonies that have been repeatedly given to our brethren in the ministry, and to the physicians and managers of the Battle Creek Sanitarium and the Health Retreat, that the work of the gospel minister and of the physician should be combined; that the minister should have a care for the physical prosperity of his flock, that the physician should be a true minister of Christ, laboring for the health of the soul as well as for the body. With this instruction in view I have felt that our brethren made a grave mistake when they put a check upon our ministers from teaching health reform, and called for specialists to do that work. It would have been better if the specialists had been employed to teach the ministers, so that their work with the people would have been more effective.

I have felt that it was just as grave an error for Dr. Kellogg to make everything of the health work, and belittle the evangelistic work, as he virtually does by magnifying the one so far above the other. I have felt that his criticisms were largely out of place regarding the work of Brother Semmens during the past two years, because in treating the matter as though Semmens was not fulfilling his mission while dividing his time between evangelical and nursing work, he virtually says that persons trained in the health work must make that their exclusive business; and thus he does just what the [General] Conference did in putting asunder that which God has joined together.

2. From my experience with the work in America, I have felt that a foundation principle for every branch of our health and temperance work in these colonies, should be that it is guided, controlled, aided, and sustained by the church represented in the Conference Committee. (W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, June 17, 1896. WCW bk. 10, pp. 81-2.)

The same rationale that resulted in the licensing of Semmens to the ministry would later result in the licensing of Mrs. S. M. I. Henry because of her participation in the Women's Gospel Work. Later, as Mrs. White would contemplate the benefits that came to men and women who had experience in canvassing work, she wrote:

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

Further insight into Mrs. White's concept of ministry comes from considering her concepts of tithe usage.

THE TITHE FACTOR

The most relevant of Ellen White's statements on tithe usage occurred during her ministry in Australia. Indeed, in 1897, she wrote:

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 had questions directed here 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. (Ellen White, Letter 40, 1897.)

It seems significant that, while Ellen White was stressing a singleness of purpose in the use of tithe funds, that she would broaden the potential recipients of those funds to include women who, until the Ellen White statements, were ineligible for receiving those funds. It is even more significant when one considers that financial exigencies had vastly narrowed the availability of those funds. As the concept of women's ministry was expanding, however, it became apparent that Ellen White considered that ministry as much in the line of gospel ministry as those considered conventional.

The binding element regarding those who qualified as tithe recipients to Ellen White seemed to be those who were directly presenting the gospel message to those who had not heard it before or to those who were involved in pastoral-instructional functions within the church. Thus minister's wives who were instructing other women in missionary work, women who were doing house to house labor in presenting the gospel to other women, women Bible teachers who were instructing student-workers regarding doctrines and methods of evangelism, women who were teaching other women in Bible reading and home visitation techniques, women who were laboring in "word and doctrine," women medical

missionaries, all were eligible in Ellen White's thinking to receive tithe funds.

It seems inconsistent that Ellen White would be calling for expenditures in tithe resources when the church was unable to pay those currently ordained, but it is during this very time period when Ellen White was calling consistently for many more laborers, in fact, hundreds, where there was then one. The rationale for her call, at the time she was focusing upon a "carefully guard[ed] tithe fund" that would be held "sacred for one purpose" was her concept of expanded ministry.

In addressing the question of the nature of the 19th century church, with its focus upon husband-wife ministry and the question of tithe usage, Mrs. White observed that she had received "light upon this subject" even prior to her going to Australia in 1891. She then made a statement that really reduces the ordination of women question to a moot point:

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 [emphasis supplied]. The method of paying men-laborers and not their wives, is a plan not after the Lord's order. . . . This arrangement . . . is liable to discourage our sisters from qualifying themselves for the work they should engage in [i.e. ministry]. . . . Seventh-day Adventists are not in any way to belittle woman's work. . . . This question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it. You are to do your duty to the women who labor in the gospel. (Ellen White, "The Laborer Is Worthy of His Hire," Mss. 43a, 1897. MR 267.)

Clearly reacting to the team evangelistic efforts so successfully conducted by J. O. Corliss in Australia, Mrs. White's next statement informs us why she was looking for "hundreds of laborers" where there was then one:

After the community has been stirred by a well organized camp-meeting, then shall the workers pull up stakes and leave to attend another camp-meeting and let the work ravel out? I say, Divide the workers and have some take right hold, giving Bible readings, doing colporter work, selling tracts, etc. Let there be a mission home to prepare workers by educating them in every line of the work. This will not leave the work to ravel out. The good impressions the messengers of God have made upon hearts and minds will not be lost. This house-to-house labor, searching for souls, hunting for the lost sheep is the most essential work that can be done. . . .

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 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. (Ellen White to Brethren Irwin, Evans, Smith, and Jones, April 21, 1898. I191a, 1898. 6ST, 1897-98, pp. 62, 68, 69.)

Ellen White is clearly calling for a paid women's ministry. Her statements concerning their being paid from tithe were even more startling in the setting of the severe economic crisis being faced by the church at the time. Her statements obviously anticipate the 20th century church with its pastoral-instructional functions. Ellen White affirmed that she was not troubled over the "poor souls" who were laboring for nothing for she "will not allow it to go thus." (Ibid.)

ELLEN WHITE AND ORDINATION TO THE CHRISTIAN HELP WORK

Ellen White's focus upon a "ministry of compassion" resolved the pastoral-evangelistic dilemma of the 19th century and brought the church a methodology for dealing with 20th century urban realities. Beginning in June of 1895, Ellen White wrote a series of articles that focused upon methodologies designed to evangelize the cities. The methodology was born of the experiences in Australia, but designed to be applied universally. One of the proposals made by Ellen White in her series of articles that appeared in the Review was that women involved in this evangelistic methodology "should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands." (RH, July 9, 1895, p. 434.)

When Ellen White's wording is compared to what she would later write concerning women receiving tithe, true gospel ministry, etc., it seems to indicate that Ellen White was ready during the 1890s for full ordination of women in the ministry of the church. Let's observe some of her Review articles of 1895 before looking more closely at the Christian Help Work ministry.

On June 11, Mrs. White made it apparent that her focus was upon work "in our large cities." She called for "labor from house to house, not neglecting the poor;" because Christ preached the gospel to the poor, "we are to go and do likewise." She observed that the cities "are not worked as they should be" and called for "earnest work, by hard, painful experience" to "reach the men and the women of our cities." In her June 18 continuation, Mrs. White observed that "the medical missionary can do a great amount of good by educating the people how to live." (RH, June 11 and 18, 1895.)

On July 9, Mrs. White was obviously endorsing the evangelistic team approach so successfully used by Corliss in Australia when she wrote:

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. . . . 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 their work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers [conference] or the minister [conference]; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. (RH, July 9, 1895, pp. 433-34.)

Ellen White is here talking, not about local church Dorcas work, but about what was then termed the Christian Help Work. The scope of that work usually transcended the local church since it involved instruction by a medical missionary who was paid from conference [tithe] funds and because it was designed to impact upon cities in a way that would absorb more than local funds. This was certainly true in Australia. The "counsel" Ellen White referred to prior to ordination meant seeking approval from

conference officials, not primarily from local church officials.

On two occasions prior to this point in her article, Mrs. White used the terms "Conference officer . . . minister" and was clearly not referring to local church actions. Such would not have been likely in Australia within the few local churches then in existence. Such local action might have been possible within the United States, however, and the issue is not vital since it is clear that Ellen White was advocating the ordination of women to a specific ministry called "Christian Help Work." This is evidenced by the following to O. A. Olsen from J. W. Watt, president of the Indiana Conference:

Quite a question has come to me recently in regard to a statement made by Sister White in the Review of July 9, 1895, in regard to setting apart some of our devoted sisters to the Christian help work by laying on of hands and prayer. One of our local elders desires to know if it would be proper for a local elder to ordain women to this work. We have not as yet carried into effect this instruction in this conference and I would like to know how you understand the matter and have you any further light on the matter, more than is stated in the Review as above cited? [Unfortunately, there is no record of a response by Olsen.] (J. W. Watt to O. A. Olsen, Jan. 2, 1896. RG 21, 1896 incoming.)

Mrs. White continued her focus upon a new type of ministry for the cities in her Review articles. She attacked the centralizing tendencies at Battle Creek and focused away from "laws and rules specified by men. There must be no fixed rules; our work is a progressive work, and there must be room left for methods to be improved upon." She solemnly proclaimed, "Brethren, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me," and warned against any plans that would neglect "the poor and afflicted." She pointed to Isaiah 58 as the Biblical rationale for the message of the time:

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 rereward." (RH, July 23, Aug. 13, Aug. 20, 1895. *Bracketed material is in Ellen White's original article. See articles of Sept. 24, Oct. 15, Nov. 12, 1895, and Jan. 7, 1896, for additional insights into Ellen White's concept of a new "compelling" ministry that would impact upon the cities.)

Ellen White's Review articles make it abundantly that her concept of ministry called for a broadening, rather than a narrowing, of the burden of "ministering." Her focus seemed more in the line of "pastoral" work and she often called for a ministry during this period that stressed more the teaching-personal labor kind of ministry than that of "sermonizing."

The Ellen White emphasis impacted upon the United States and her articles and messages brought the Christian Help Work to a high level of activity. Obviously responding to the focus of Ellen White, O. A. Olsen urged Miss Abbie Winegar, recent graduate of the medical course, to work "on the principles of health, and Christian Help work" during a visit in the Upper Columbia Conference. He wrote the president of that conference:

I am glad that you will have present with you Dr. Winegar, who came from your Conference to take only a short course here, but which was finally lengthened out to a medical course. I have great respect for Dr. Winegar. The Lord has blessed her, and she is developing to be a very efficient and reliable worker. Now, it would seem to me that while she is out there, if it were possible for you to make arrangements by which she could be prevailed upon to remain even a short time, and visit some of the churches, some of the larger churches, that she might be able to be very helpful in the work. I know her heart is in the message; I know she has ability to give instruction to the people. In a course arranged here at Battle Creek last winter, during which the physicians from the Sanitarium conducted a line of health study in the districts here in the church, Dr. Winegar was one of the most proficient, and her work was very highly appreciated. The Conference could well afford to be at some expense in utilizing her time for awhile in the work. 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, 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.

I just call attention to the matter, knowing that Dr. Winegar is out there. 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. (O. A. Olsen to Dr. Abbie Winegar, May 22, 1895 and R. S. Donnell, May 21, 1895. RG 11, bk. 14, pp. 386, 379-80.)

The Christian Help ministry impacted very prominently within the denomination by 1897. Ministers were making that the primary focus of their evangelistic thrusts by that year. The secretary of the GC reported:

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 has called especial attention of all our churches, and especially those that are in the large cities, to this line of work. (L. A. Hoopes to W. T. Drummond, Sept. 20, 1897. RG 21, bk. 22, p. 491.)

CONCLUSION

The history of Christian Help Work in Australia and New Zealand in the 19th century would entail a study in itself. Suffice it to say that by 1899 Australasia maintained four separate institutions providing foundation to this ministry: the Helping Hand City Mission in Melbourne; the Helping Hand Laundry in Perth; the Rescue Home in Adelaide; and the Rescue Home in Napier, New Zealand. "Pastor" Margaret Caro, a licensed minister, actively guided the Christian Help Work in Napier. Legion are the stories that could be told about the conversions that resulted from this ministry, but perhaps the following Ellen White statements will show why ordination of women to such ministry was appropriate and also how Ellen White has pointed us to a Biblical rationale for ordaining women:

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. ("The Needs of the Cause in Australasia: An Appeal," June 11, 1903, Art. 59. ST 1899-1903, p. 492.)

The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within. ("He That Loveth Not His Brother Abideth in Death," Aug. 2, 1899. ST 1898-99, L. A. Hoopes Volume, p. 295.)

The true disciple, in whose heart Christ abides, shows forth to the world Christ's love for humanity. He is God's helping hand. The glow of

spiritual health thrills his whole being as he receives from the Saviour grace to give to others. This is medical missionary work. Its performance heals the wounds inflicted upon disordered human nature by the one who was once a covering cherub. . . . Pure and undefiled religion is not a sentiment, but a doing of works of love and mercy. . . . [Note: the term "helping hand" is especially relevant since it was the name given several of the Christian Help Work missions in Australia. There were also a number of Christian Help Work missions in the United States called by the term "helping hand."]

If men AND WOMEN [emphasis supplied] 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 rereward. . . .

Wake up, wake up, my brethren AND SISTERS [emphasis supplied]. 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. . . .

Of those who act as his helping hand the Lord says, "Ye shall be named PRIESTS [emphasis added] of the Lord; men shall call you the MINISTERS [emphasis added] of our God [Isaiah 61:6]. . . . Shall we not try to crowd all the goodness and love and compassion we can into our lives, that these words may be said of us? (Ellen White, Jan. 17, 1901, B7 1901. ST 1901, pp. 298, 301, 302, 303.)

APPENDIX

Women Licensed to Seventh-day Adventist Ministry, 1878-1900

The following list is minimal. A full checking of all conference reports printed in the Review would no doubt reveal additional women "licensed to preach" by the SDA church. If local conference papers were available, even more names would probably be added.

BALLENGER, Ida W	JOHNSON, Anna
BARTLETT, Edith	LANE, Ellen S
CARO, Margaret	LINDSAY, S A (Mrs.)
COLLINS, Libbie	MORSE, Helen L
ENOCH, Hattie	OWEN, Julia
FULTON, Anna	PIERCE, S E (Mrs.)
FULTON, Libbie	PLUMMER, Flora
HASKELL, Hetty	POST, Lizzie
HENRY, Sarepta Irish	ROBINSON, Mina
HIBBEN, Ida W	WIGHTMAN, Lulu
HILL, Ruie	