

West Nordic Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



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March 2, 1989

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Elder Neal C. Wilson, President
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
6840 Eastern Avenue NW,
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*Annate!
Please make a
copy of this document
and keep it with the
letter for me - ad
give a copy of the
paper to Geo. Reid
out to
the members
of the
Norwegian
Commission*

Dear Brother Wilson,

Finally, I am sending the paper which you asked me to prepare. The project is long overdue, and I am sorry for that. May be it will reach you too late. Hopefully, you may still let the committee read it before the next session.

This assignment has been rather hard to fulfill due to circumstances that I wrote you about in December. My wife, by the way, is doing fine, something we as a family are very thankful for. The Lord has been good to us.

In addition, I have carried a heavy load of evangelistic responsibilities which has gone on from the middle of January. You see, a year ago I promised pastor Mark Finley to be part of his evangelistic team in Copenhagen 8 weeks from January '89 until last part of March. With three meetings a week together with the administrative tasks, it has been a tough winter.

However, it has been refreshing and Brother Finley's inspiring evangelistic leadership has so far stirred us all who have had a part in the campaign. At March 11, Mark Finley will start the final harvesting part of the campaign, and we believe this will become a joyful experience for the work in Denmark. Between five and six hundred none SDA people have, after several weeks attended the fifteen different seminars or meetings that have been going on. The total number was all the way up in more than two thousand in the beginning weeks. But it has stabilized itself around six hundred the last weeks. The field school which has been conducted among interns from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Netherlands, and stirring preaching among our downtown churches in Copenhagen have all been to a great blessing.

May God grant us many souls won for His kingdom. Please, remember this very important evangelistic event in the Westnordic Union in your prayers.

If there should be any questions about the paper, please let me know by sending messages by telefax. Even though I most of the time stay in Copenhagen, I will do my uttermost to give you prompt answers.

Sincerely yours,

Rolf H. Kvinge
Rolf H. Kvinge
President

**A REVIEW OF PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF
WOMEN IN FULL-TIME MINISTRY**

by

R. H. Kvinge, President West-Nordic Union

INTRODUCTION

Years of study regarding the proposal to ordain women to the ministry have considered many aspects of this rather controversial issue. Exegesis and theological investigation, as well as consideration of historical and cultural factors have all been carried out in order to get as clear a perspective on the question as possible. Papers have been presented pro et contra but the church has not as yet been able to reach a final decision.

Part of the reluctance to go ahead with the proposal may be due to uncertainty when it comes to the practical implications of the matter. Is the role of pastoral leadership well suited for women? How will a move toward ordination of women relate to the ideals for family life held by the Adventist church? Should full-time ministerial work be a possibility for all women, or only the unmarried or those who have no children or whose children are grown? Will Conference policies, when it comes to moving the pastors, giving leave of absence for family-increase, have to be reconsidered if the church takes such a step? If women are not ordained to the ministry, what other meaningful roles can they play in pastoral service? These are some of the many questions that arise.

Much of this paper is based on material that comes out of the experience of other churches. One obvious reason for this is the fact that there is really no Adventist practice to refer to. In the appropriate places I have drawn on both Bible and Spirit of Prophecy materials.

I have drawn extensively on two written reports of research carried out by the Norwegian Women's Theological Society, "**Employment and Working Conditions for Women in Pastoral Ministry**" (1984), and "**Investigation Concerning Pregnancy, Children and Pastoral Ministry**" (1988). In addition I have had interviews with a woman minister in the Lutheran Church of Norway.

Before going on with the discussion a word about my own experience would be in order. I am one of those who believe in women taking part in the Gospel ministry. Having been engaged in public evangelism for years, I have over and over again come to admire the kind of work a woman is able to perform in leading sinners to Christ. To people who are broken and hurting from the strains and stresses of life, the supporting ministry of a woman is a unique and perhaps irreplaceable resource in ministering the healing of the gospel to individuals and families. The church desperately needs this resource in order to fulfill her mission.

On the other hand, I am also one of those who is reluctant to give support to the proposal to ordain women to the ministry. Formerly, while serving as a

conference president, I have employed women in pastoral work with the possibility that they might be on the road to ordination as pastors. During that time I had been searching for Biblical backing for such ordination. I must confess that as of today I have not found sufficiently clear evidence from the Scriptures and therefore I do not feel free to support such a move. At the same time I have prayed God for wisdom and an open mind and heart to act according to His will.

My prayer is that the church we love and work for may move forward unitedly also in this area and that we may avoid the kind of schism that so many other churches have experienced because of this issue.

THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

Before looking at the practical implications of women in gospel ministry it would seem useful to briefly review some important aspects of the Biblical concept of ministry.

The root concept of both Hebrew and Greek terms for ministry has to do with "being of service" to someone.¹ It can be spoken of as a service to God, "to glorify God and love him forever",² or it may be used with the reference to service to man and his need of salvation. Too often the work of ministering has been looked upon as applying only to the ordained ministry, but on the basis of the practices of the early church and with current ascendancy of the "theology of the laity", Christian ministry is now being viewed, more correctly, as the calling of the entire church.³ The varied ministries are almost limitless. According to the New Testament it addresses itself to persons in all kinds of life-situations like crises, poverty, sickness, rejections, despair, bereavement, bewilderment. It is an integral part of all that the church does.

A Ministry of Leadership.

While it is true that the entire church engages in ministry, it is equally true that some people are called and set apart for a specific ministry, to be ministers of ministers. A most important passage for understanding this specialized ministry is Eph 4:7-16. Paul's apostolic mission, described by the phrase, "the grace given me,"⁴ falls in this category. The gift of the Spirit here creates a responsibility and then extends a calling for its exercise.

Under the guidance of the Lord's Spirit, the early church began to select leaders to meet its needs. These tended to be either itinerant, charismatic ministries in which perennial evangelism was exercised, or the more local ex

¹ Lawrence O. Richards, A Theology of Christian Education (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 231.

² Franklin M. Segler, A Theology of Church and Ministry (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1960), p. 23.

³ Edward F. Murphy, Spiritual Gifts and the Great Commission (South Pasadena, CA: Mandate Press, 1975), p. 1978.

⁴ Rom 15:15.

officio ministry of leadership shared by ministers (pastors) and deacons⁵ (Matt 4:19; Acts 13:2,3; 15:6,22) The functions of these leadership roles seem to have been under two "offices" and Paul designated them as "bishop" or "overseer" and "deacon" as presented in 1 Tim 3:1-3. There may, however, be evidence that the early churches had a plurality of roles (John 11:54; 2 Cor 6:4; 8:7; 11:15).

The Function of Leadership Ministry

The essential nature of the leadership ministry is also that of service (diakonia).⁶ It was a leadership based upon the "power" to render service and never on "lordship". This specialized ministry can only realize itself in service,⁷ and as Thomas M. Lindsay states, the chief service which it provides is that of setting an example in loving service⁸ (See 2 Cor 6:3-10).

The setting of an example seems to be a vital element in the leadership ministry. Paul states: "We put no stumbling-block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited" (2 Cor 6:3 NIV). When Segler comments on this example and the influence of this ministry he says: "In one sense it grows out of the pastor's character and spiritual discernment and is so recognized by the church. It is the kind of authority which Paul implied as he said: 'For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel, I urge you, then, be imitators of me'" (1 Cor 4:15,16).⁹

Jesus not only taught, but also demonstrated the leadership ministry in what often is called the Servant Motif. One is represented by the word "to send", the other by the word to "serve". He describes himself as being "sent" upon the mission of the Father (Matt 15:24; Mark 9:37; Luk 9:48;). In turn, Jesus sent forth the twelve (Matt 10:5,10; Luk 9:2) and the seventy (Luk 10:1).

He also points to Himself as the One who serves. The first apostles were given practical lessons in this. They observed Him heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, restore sight to the blind, exorcise demons, and raise the dead. They heard Him teach on the hillside and preach in the synagogue. He taught the disciples the rule "whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:27-28, RSV).

Jesus at this point taught the very essence of true ministry, in which service is presented as a love-gift.¹⁰ A correct understanding of this verse

⁵ Segler, p. 61.

⁶ John Knox, Ministry in Historical Perspective, quoted in Segler, Theology of Church and Ministry (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), p. 1-124.

⁷ Arnold Bittlinger, Gifts and Ministries (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), p. 72.

⁸ The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran Company, N.d.), p. 151.

⁹ Segler, p.73.

¹⁰ J.R. Claypool, "Theology of Ministry," Southwestern Journal of Theology 15 (Spring 1973):7.

can be a corrective in the active practice of ministry. God in His dealing with mankind has no hidden motives. His whole concern is to share. As this perspective dawned upon the disciples, they restored the Greek word agape¹¹ and gave it a new meaning.¹²

As we proceed with this study it seems important, then, to have the following concepts in mind:

1. All kinds of ministries, the ministry of preaching, healing, kindness and love, stewardship and public services etc., as well as the ministry of leadership is a ministry of service, moved by this willingness to serve whenever and wherever God commands.
2. From the very outset both male and female alike will in principle be able to participate in ministry.
3. The leadership ministry, however, seems to have an element of demand presented by the apostles where certain factors may easily clash with other very important functions in life. As we have seen above the leadership ministry:
 - i is not only to serve, however important that may be. But the very essence of this ministry is that of setting an example, being, like Paul, "a father in Christ Jesus through the gospel" for others.
 - ii is also a ministry which commends itself in every way, in great endurance, in troubles--etc (2 Cor 6:4ff). In other words, this ministry does not seem to have any competitors at its side. You are either in it, or you stay out of it!
4. Finally, this ministry is presented as a "love-gift" where a person renders talents, time and possessions to the Lord as the apostle Paul stated to the Corinthians: "We are not withholding our affection from you."

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITION FOR WOMEN PASTORS TODAY

The historic tradition within Christianity provides for a male clergy. A feminine counterpart with more specialized ministries has occurred, but ordination, which gave authority to function in sacramental and leadership offices, was limited to men. The model for this was undoubtedly the example of Christ's selection of male apostles in the beginning of the Christian period.

¹¹ "While Eros, the pagan principle of "love", with a value that is already there, just becoming ablaze with passion for that egocentric way; Agape, the unique heaven-born principle of Christian love, has an entirely different attitude: It creates the value, miraculously calls it into being, where it never existed, as yet. It creates the values as it loves" (Carsten Johnsen, "How Could Lucifer Conceive the Idea of Rivalry with Jesus Christ?" Xeroxed class material, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI: 1975)

¹² Arndt and Gingrich, s.v. "Agape".

It was not until the turn of the 20th century that the question of ordination of women became an issue. And only in the sixties and seventies of our century did some churches, for example in Europe, actually ordain women to the ministry.

We have in previous papers (by Nahkola and Holmes) been made aware of how other churches have experienced female ordination. The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland had, in 1986, only 30 women ministers out of 2036, still a rather low percentage. The Nahkola report told us that the leadership of the church felt that the reluctance to accept women workers was based on a "too literal and unthinking use of the biblical texts that refer to women".

The Lutheran church in Sweden in 1985 had 18% women of the total clergy. The Holmes report told us that "the debate in Sweden was a bitter one, and the 1958 decision had caused a most serious schism within the Church of Sweden".¹³ The Nahkola paper told us, however, "that in a final analysis the opposition in Sweden to ordination only came from a very small minority of the church's membership".¹⁴

"The Lutheran church in Finland reached its decision to ordain women to the priesthood in 1986, after the matter had been under discussion for 30 years," according to Nahkola. She further states that the Lutheran Church is not expected to split over the issue of ordination.

When the first two women were ordained in the Lutheran church in Denmark, 514 ministers threatened to leave their office.¹⁵ But no-one followed it up, and today 100 women ministers are part of the Lutheran clergy in Denmark. Although I cannot refer to any specific research on the current situation, it is my impression that this development has not caused any serious problems or schism in Denmark.

Working Conditions of Women Ministers in Norway

27 years after the first ordination of a woman within the Lutheran church of Norway a woman minister still faces a number of practical problems when she seeks employment and ordination in this church. In the study from 1984, "Employment and Working Conditions for Women in Pastoral Ministry," 53 out of a total of 72 ordained women ministers (74%) responded to questions about ordination, employment, and practical problems a woman minister faces in her service.

¹³ C. Raymond Holmes, *The Ordination of Woman and the Anglican-Episcopal Experience: The Road to Schism*. (A Case study prepared for the Biblical Research Institute of GC of SDA, 1987), p. 21.

¹⁴ Aulikki Nahkola, "The Ordination of Woman: The Experience of four European Churches". Oct. 1987, p. 12.

¹⁵ Kristin Molland Norderval, Mot Strømmen (Oslo, Norge: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag A/S, 1982), p. 201.

The age grouping was as follows:

17	minsters under 35 years.	34%
22	ministers between 35-44.	44%
5	ministers between 45-54.	10%
6	ministers over 54 years.	12%
3	ministers already retired.	

One of the problems these women face, is that it is hard to get employment as a regular minister with the title of parish priest in a county or city. Only 7 out of 53 held that position. These women end up as institutional ministers (11 out of 53), assistant ministers (11 out of 53), stand-in ministers (10 out of 53) and other jobs as teaching or secretaries in some organizations.

The report concludes that the women seem to disappear in the nomination lists. Either they are not listed at all, or they are put up as number 2 or 3. A reason for this, according to the investigation, may be that the bishop, the dean (overseer of several parishes) or the church boards are opposed to woman ministers. It is only as the Government's Department for Church Affairs, over-rules the leaders in the Church that women may get into higher positions. The report further states, without documentary information, that church leadership, after 27 years of ordination, still has an ambivalent attitude toward women ministers and there is concern that it may cause contention and schism in the congregations.¹⁶

Problems relating to ordination. The question was asked whether these women ministers had experienced problems in order to receive ordination?¹⁷ 22 or 42% answered Yes, and 31 or 58% answered No. 21 of those who had problems indicated that their problems related to the fact of being a woman. The researcher, commenting on this, concludes that it is not satisfactory that the individual bishop determines who receives ordination or not.

The pattern for seeking ordination is that the woman minister addresses herself to the bishop of the bishopric where she was first employed or to the bishop of bishopric she currently is located in. If she gets a negative response, she may address herself to a third bishop. 8 ministers or 15% had gone the long way to a third alternative before ordination was granted. This is a little surprising as women already at the very outset, when seeking employment, know which bishop is against ordination and who is for.

Refusing the use of church-buildings. Another problem that this research has revealed, is that 15 ministers or 28% have been refused the use of a church-building outside their own parish. 32 had not experienced that, while 3 did not know and 3 did not answer.

Refusal to use a church-building in a different parish occurred for the following types of occasions: 7 for wedding ceremony, 6 for baptism, 8 for regular worship, and 4 for other occasions. No refusal occurred for funerals. The investigator comments "that opponents of women ministers do not find a funeral situation to be an appropriate occasion for demonstrating

¹⁶ Employment and Working Conditions for Woman in Pastoral Ministry. p. 14.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 16.

resistance".¹⁸

Collaboration with the church in the parish did not seem to be a great problem. The women generally speaking felt they were accepted both by colleagues and church-members. As one woman states: "I know there are persons in the church that are against women ministers, but usually they keep a low profile."¹⁹ The same minister continues: "Of course I meet colleagues who are against women ministers, but usually they behave rather politely, in order to differentiate between principle and person. The problem is of course theirs and not mine."²⁰

Summary

All the time up to our own century, the ministry in charge of the sacraments and leadership was a male clergy. Only in the middle of our century do some churches take the route of ordaining women for the gospel ministry.

In practically all the churches where a change in ordination has taken place, we discover practical problems. The investigation done in Norway after a period of 27 years of practising the ordination of women has revealed the following:

1. Women seeking ministerial employment are, according statistics, over-represented in stand-in and institutional ministries in comparison to average among Lutheran ministers (40% as compared with 11%).
2. Women ministers is also over-represented in the bishoprics where the bishop is favorable to ordination of women. The largest number of women ministers is concentrated in two bishoprics, Oslo and Hamar which does indicate a certain opposition throughout a large part of Norway.
3. A little less than half of the women asked had problems when it came to ordination even though this, in the State Church, has been voted by law.
4. We also noticed that 1/3 of the women had experienced refusal to use church buildings in other parishes when conducting different church ceremonies. This also came to the surface in my interview with a woman minister. Her colleague tried to put obstacles in her way, both in using the church-building, taking part in greater celebrations, or being a preacher at Christmas and Easter occasions.
5. However, the investigation did indicate that the women had rather few collaboration problems out in the field.

Without question there exists a greater or lesser degree of unrest and friction in all of the churches that practise ordination of women. The women in ministry frequently face practical problems. As the woman minister I interviewed said: "I expected as I came to a bishopric where the bishop was pro-

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 30.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 33.

²⁰ Ibid.

ordination of woman that conflicts of this nature would be out of the question! However, for four years I sensed the conflict quite actively. The major minister in our parish, who was against ordination, gave me minor preaching responsibilities, somehow kept me at arm's length when it came to leadership, the decision process, and also the teaching of those being confirmed. Thus I finally decided to apply for institutional work."²¹

The question is unavoidable, are we prepared to face the same situation in our own church? What we see in these other churches is often a reasonably calm outward situation but with many unresolved conflicts under the surface. From time to time they come out in the open and the threat of dissension is there. Recently a woman was elected as dean (overseer of several parishes) in the Lutheran Church of Norway. Her candidacy had not been proposed by the bishop or the church boards, which is the common procedure. She was appointed to the office by the government's department of Church Affairs. Again the conflict surfaced, with big newspaper headings and a lot of publicity. If similar conditions would result in our church we would have a serious problem to deal with. Such a situation is obviously undesirable and unavoidably affects evangelism and church growth as well.

FAMILY OBLIGATIONS AND THE WOMAN MINISTER

One reason why church administrators have tended to be reluctant to hire women into the gospel ministry is related to a woman's role in family life. After a time women have tended to give up their employment in order to get married and thus enter into a new role in life. Church leadership, and also the women themselves, have felt that it would be difficult to continue in full-time ministry and at the same time fulfill the responsibilities of marriage, particularly that of being a mother.

Today, the feminist movement has been a factor in changing attitudes in this area. It is often held that there is no real role difference between man and woman. The old role differentiation of the man as the breadwinner and the woman as the homemaker is considered obsolete. The common opinion is therefore that this concept should be eradicated.

This situation makes it necessary to ask if the Scriptures give any guidance on this question. Does the Bible present some scheme or model of the roles of the sexes?

The Biblical Family Model

The family concept has its origin in God's creation. It was the Creator who in the beginning "joined man and woman together" in matrimony (Matt 19:6). And it is the same God who orders the two spouses to work dilligently to uphold the home. It is even considered a test of Christian faith whether a couple supports the home or not. "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8). The good works, which God in advance has prepared for us to do (Eph 2:10) is just at our fingertips in a family situation.

Some would argue that the church is more significant than the home. But the Biblical picture of the family portrays it as an arena for the exercise of

²¹ Personal interview with a Lutheran woman minister.

faith and love of the same kind that is found in the church. The Christian home is a small social unit of intimate Christian communion. Thus, it can be the individual's greatest spiritual resource at the level of a human institution, for it is both a divine and a human institution. It was the first social unit which God established, and it is a mistake to give it second place to the church. In reality, there is no conflict of loyalties here, because the home and the church do not need to be competing institutions.

If this presupposition can be agreed upon we better understand why we in Scripture find it emphasized that an "Overseer must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's Church" (1 Tim 3:4,5)? The Overseer is an example in the Christian life for the whole church. Therefore these words convey a message to all parents, not least to the fathers. It shows us not only what we should do, but also what God expects of parents. Few things are more important in life than to build a good home. But it demands energy, time and care. And the Bible seems to expect something both from husband and wife, as both are responsible!

Distribution of Responsibility in the Home.

Does the Bible give us any indication as to the distribution of responsibility in the home?

From the book of Proverbs, chapter 31, we discover that a home is more than a place for eating and sleeping! At times it could even be a workshop as was the home of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2-4). This shows a woman having a part in vocational and business activities. But, are the roles of husband and wife to be the same?

There are Scripture references that definitely give the woman a special obligation of the home. Read for example 1 Tim 5:10; 5:14; and Tit 2:4,5. Even though the husband should take an active part in the bringing up of children, this is even more strongly emphasized for the woman. The apostle urged the woman to be "busy at home", a vocation that should be learned and developed. The role of a mother is a fundamental function and God expects her to stay in that role, at least as long as there are children in the home. "In no other way can a mother help the church more than by devoting her time to those who are dependent upon her for instruction and training."²²

Home Obligations and the Demands of the Ministry

At this point the question may be asked: How would a married woman in full-time ministry be able to cope with family obligations as referred to above? How will a mother be able to fulfill her role both as a mother, and at the same time as a gospel worker or a pastor? What are some of the practical implications she faces?

To my knowledge the church has, as a rule, never followed the practice of hiring women with motherly responsibilities as gospel workers. At least it has not been practiced in my part of the world. But what will be the case if a woman receive the responsibility of ordination? Will a mother be able to live up to the ordination vows? Will the church expect a continuous full-time ministry?

22 E.G. White, The Adventist Home. p. 247

As referred to earlier in the paper, ordination to the ministry places a great responsibility on the person. The Manual for Ministers describes ordination as the "setting apart of a person to a sacred calling" and states that the minister is "subject to the direction of the church in regard to the type of ministry and the place of service."²³ This definitely indicates that an ordained minister has a primary responsibility to serve the church. He has to be willing to go where the church calls him. Many other obligations will have to give way if he is to fulfill his solemn vow.

Implications of Ministry and Family Obligations: A Norwegian Investigation

Some interesting findings come out of the previously mentioned Norwegian research to which we now turn, "Investigation Concerning Pregnancy, Children and Pastoral Ministry." A questionnaire was sent out to 70 women ministers. 35 of them responded to questions under the headings, (1) A minister with a baby in her stomach, (2) After delivery, (3) A minister and also mother of small children, (4) Minister with school age children in the home, and (3) Minister and family.

It will be worthwhile to consider in some detail some of the most significant responses given.

1 A minister with a baby in her stomach

24 responded to this first item and 21 acknowledged that they had been pregnant while in service, while 3 answered no.

As to the inconvenience of being pregnant while in service answers were as follows:

- * Problems of standing during preaching. 5
- * Long days and much traveling 2
- * Negative response from the congregation 0

How did you experience your working capacity?

- * Strongly reduced 2
- * Somewhat reduced 3
- * Variable 2
- * Condition good 9

Did you feel it was a bad experience to go through?

- * No 9
- * Yes, while in service around the clock 1
- * Too much notice seemed annoying 1

What was the good about it?

- * A big stomach is something which shows, and eases up the contact barrier, especially with other women.
- * Flexible working-hours give room for planning rest periods, and reduced working capacity does give excellent practice in the art of limitation.
- * The Christmas message was experienced in a new way, also from the congregations' point of view.

It might be mentioned here that the woman minister whom I interviewed, was herself pregnant. She was in the eighth month. She worked as minister in an

²³ Manual for Ministers, (Washington D.C. 1977), p. 16.

institution for elderly people. She observed that none had commented about her pregnancy. She felt however that some of the older people felt a little embarrassed having a minister who conducted services with a big stomach. At her first funeral in her pregnancy, the funeral director commented that this was the first funeral this firm had arranged with a pregnant minister!

2 After delivery

This section was answered by 25 persons altogether. 5 responded "Yes" to the question of a well planned pregnancy with relationship to delivery/leave of absence and the church calendar. 14 answered "No."

As to the length of leave of absence after delivery these were the answers:

*	6 weeks	2
*	18 weeks	14
*	1/2 year	2
*	1 year or more	5
*	terminated	1

To the question of satisfaction around the leave of absence policy 2 answered "Yes" and 17 answered "No."

Did you take contact with the office of the bishop for planning the leave of absence period a) and did you receive any help? b)

*	Yes	6	No	6
*	No help	2.	I had to fight hard for sympathy in order to get half of the leave of absence I needed.	

What bad experiences after delivery can you refer to?

- * I wish I did not have to be a minister during this period!
- * The leave of absence period was too short.
- * I became psychologically more sensitive than earlier, and was not able to handle emotional strain.
- * It is unfortunate to live in the same building where we have the office and the same telephone.

Can you refer to any good experiences?

- * There is an increased interest in the minister's situation from the congregation.
- * It surprised the patients at the hospital that I was a minister and at the same time as common as other people!

3 Minister and a mother of small children

22 responded to this section and all of these stated that their spouse worked outside the home.

Who is in charge of babysitting while you are in service?

*	Spouse	8
*	Relatives	2
*	Babysitter at my home	6
*	Babysitter outside home	10

* Part time kindergarten	9
* Full time kindergarten	7
* Other	2

Babysitting in evening and in the weekends

* Spouse	21
* Relative	2
* Young person	6
* It varies	10

Does the babysitting program satisfy you?

* Yes	10
* No	6

If no, what changes do you wish?

- * A place in full time kindergarten.
- * Domestic help.
- * Babysitter from the county.

How do you experience your working capacity with small children?

* Good, because I only have part time service.	
* Very strenuous as in lack of domestic help.	
* Capacity reduced	9
* Extra work because of much more work in the home.	

Did the work in the church become more difficult as your obligation increased?

* Yes	11
* No	5

If your answer is yes, did the church react on this?

- * The wish of domestic help was looked upon as snobbery.
- * It was unusual for the church that the minister spent more time with the family. 5
- * The church reacted favorably.

Bad experiences from this period of your service.

- * The need of the children through 24 hours a day constantly collide with preaching preparation, telephone calls and counseling.
- * There is also a danger to work too much outside the home and thus the temptation to escape from the situation at home.
- * Fever of 40 degrees centigrades for the child was not a valid excuse for the minister to stay away from a Christmas-party.
- * It is way too expensive with all the babysitting I need.

Any good experience from this period of your service?

- * My situation as a mother is accepted by both colleagues and congregation.
- * Having children creates a good contact net in my service.

4 A Minister with school age children in the home

Only 11 responded to this section, and all 11 were in service when the children were small.

Do you feel that the job makes it difficult to be in good contact with your children?

*	Yes	5
*	No	6

Who is in charge of the children after school time while you are working?

*	Spouse	4
*	Other relatives	1
*	Babysitter at home	3
*	Babysitter outside home	1
*	Society free home	2
*	Other	3
*	Children take care of themselves	7

Bad experiences from this period in service

- * Greater inconveniences on weekends and during church festivals because of collisions with childrens' interests and activities.
- * Parents now have to make up for the more happy milieu from the kindergarten.
- * The fellowship in the home becomes more complicated and unpredictable.
- * The children require more attention and can not only be "sent away".
- * It is not easy to step out of the role of a minister and only be a regular mother to a regular child.

Good experiences from this period

- * The children tend to become more independent.
- * Children of school-age do give parents help and input.

5 Minister and Family.

27 responded to this section. To the question about which of the spouses tended to have the main responsibility and care at home the answers came as follows:

*	Myself	10
*	Spouse	0
*	Both	17

Who is doing the housework

*	Myself	6
*	Spouse	2
*	Both	19
*	Babysitter	3

* Paid helper 5
* Other 2

What are some of the bad experiences within your family because of your work?

To have two fulltime jobs is possible only if your spouse has a 9-16 period work schedule.

The work on the weekends is devastating upon the family and social life.

The increasing work burden during Christmas and Easter time is a great problem which only increases as the children get older.

The role of a minister and of a mother has in common the matter of care, but where does the spouse enter that picture?

The minister is not the breadwinner in the home and her work is not considered as the most important!

If I did not have a family, I could have participated in more seminars in order to increase my knowledge. I do not have the conscience to venture into this today even though both I and my church would greatly have benefitted from it. Today I have no surplus energy for it.

In order to get employed in the church where I am today, our family had to leave the city where my husband worked. At the moment he comes home only on weekends, which seems to be a drawback for the family. Resistance against ordained women left me in my career behind in employment which all together has been a bitter experience.

In the bishop's nomination list, when I was about to be employed, he held against me that I was a mother of three children. He stated in his recommendation that the priestly service would be too tough for me. Fortunately, his recommendation was not followed by the Department of Church Affairs.

It is almost impossible for single parents or ministers who share an office together, to get hold of babysitters during the great celebration weekends and the 17th of May (Constitution/independence day--equivalent of 4th of July).

A deep sigh from a single mother: Easter and Christmas is a dilemma. Why couldn't older housewives make a contribution in the church by going home to the minister, do some washing and making cakes together with the minister's children so that the pastor in quietness and with good conscience would be able to prepare good sermons?

Good experiences that favors the role of the mother/minister

The flexible working time does give great freedom to plan a work schedule.

Which mothers having an occupation do have this much time in the morning as we have. We do not need to rush the children out early in the morning and full of nerves wait for the opening hour in the kindergarten which for many is the same point of time as the start of their own work.

Summary

The material presented by the Society of Norwegian Women's Theological Society, may not be comprehensive and extensive enough to draw any final conclusion on the topic being discussed in this chapter. The fairly small number of persons that responded to the questionnaire, may not make it statistically significant. Many additional factors, no doubt should be taken into consideration.

Nevertheless, the women asked have given answers relating to common, daily life experiences which, to a certain degree, are found at least all over the western world. In order to pursue a career and carry on a full-time job outside of the home they had to devote their best energies to this. In most cases this meant having to bring strangers into the home to take care of the children. The women reported many problems and frustrations in trying to combine home-making and full-time ministry, but also some satisfying experiences.

As we try to look at this from the vantage point of the Adventist philosophy of home and family we may make the following observations:

1. Considering the problems of the prenatal period that came to the surface in connection with pregnancy and ministerial service, the ministry may, in some ways, be no more difficult to combine with motherhood than certain other professions. There seems, however, to be a greater psychological strain in the ministry, especially in connection with spiritual guidance, counselling, conducting of funerals etc. A minister is also on duty 24 hours a day, having always to be ready to answer calls. Then there is physical strain, like standing during preaching, conducting baptisms, and travelling, to mention a few examples.

Some other concerns come to mind. How much time will there be for rest, personal edification and how much time to prepare for the child soon to be born. What about prenatal influences? "A woman's office is sacred . . . , but the effect of the prenatal influences is by many parents looked upon as a matter of little moment; but heaven does not so regard it."²⁴ We are further told that "the labour of the mother should be lightened, as great changes takes place".²⁵ How can these counsels be combined with a full-time pastoral ministry?

Another aspect is to what extent a Conference is prepared to have a minister engaged who for such a long period of time needs a completely different engagement. A large percentage of the ministers in Norway stated that they experienced a somewhat or significantly reduced working capacity in connection with child birth. Will the Adventist church be prepared for and be able to budget for such a circumstance? This latter point may not be a major problem, but it cannot be entirely overlooked.

2. After delivery a mother needs a considerable period of rest and much time with the newborn baby. From the investigation referred to above, we observed that the great majority were unsatisfied with the length of

²⁴ Ellen G. White, The Adventist Home, (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1952), p. 255.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 256.

the leave of absence and the policies that governed this. Understandably some wished they during this period could lay aside the role of ministry as they became more sensitive and were not able to handle emotional strain as before.

It is in this period, particularly that a mother needs to be "quiet, calm, and self-possessed,"²⁶ which may be rather difficult to achieve under the strain of full-time ministry.

3. The period while the children are small seemed, according to the investigation, to be the hardest period. The conflict of interest may here be at its peak. Several of those questioned wanted domestic help but most did not feel they could afford it. Unless they could depend on an understanding and helpful spouse, babysitting in the evenings was complicated. The great yearly church holidays presented a particularly difficult situation in this regard.

The responses to the study indicate that the respondents gave priority to the ministry. The woman minister whom I interviewed was a mother and a mother-to-be in her 8th month. She would always, because of the ordination vow, feel herself under obligation to give preference to the ministry. She felt she had taken that stand when she was ordained before a family was started. This had also been done in agreement with her husband.

This would come into conflict with the Adventist philosophy. We may not always practice what we preach, but we know that the child or children must be given preference. "During the first years of their lives is the time in which to work and watch and pray and encourage every good inclination. The mother should not accept burdens in the church work which compels her to neglect her children. . . . In no way can a mother help the church more than by devoting her time to those who are dependent upon her for instruction and training".²⁷

To be true to her duty the church must consider this weighty matter. Can we lay upon a mother any burden that might prevent her from carrying out her primary responsibility?

4. According to the Norwegian investigation, things seemed much easier when the children had reached school age. The children had at this stage become more independent. Nevertheless, the respondents admit the drawback of a minister's irregular working schedule or lack of leisure time which somehow tends to have a bad effect on both the family and their social life. This, however, would be much the same also when the husband is the minister.
5. Finally we looked in the investigation at the more general topic - minister and family. As was stated, it seemed that both spouses tried hard to share in the responsibility even though the woman felt that she had the final responsibility in the home.

The study reveals, however, that many problems exist. Some of these may be mentioned: lack of time, too much dependence on a faithful spouse

²⁶ Ibid. p. 261.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 246.247.

for babysitting, increasing work burdens, lack of preparation possibilities, lack of continuing training possibilities, less career possibilities in comparison with male colleagues, and a matter of status both in the church and in the family.

Another problem that surfaced here was the question of husbands of women in ministry, whether they should plan to move as their wives were transferred to another church? In one case mentioned, the husband stayed on in his old job, and came home only during the weekends to the new parish of his wife.

We sense at once a family problem which, to a certain degree, also exists in the SDA church today in the opposite way.

In the Lutheran Church in Norway female ministers sense the problem, and as I have been told interviewing church leaders and women ministers, several women have sought institutional employment in order to become more stationary and thus avoid this problem.

In the Adventist church it would seem difficult to give women ministers more or less permanent assignments to avoid such a dilemma. Both a church, but also an institution, will from time to time need a change in ministerial leadership. According to the ordination vow a minister also has declared the willingness to serve where and when the church demands.

And finally, the very family model given in the Bible with the male headship is difficult to fit into this situation.

We are may be tempted to ask the question - is it worth the prize? The practical implementation of ordaining women to the ministry seems to create far more dilemmas than what may be apparent in a theological and philosophical discussion.

We would do well to carefully consider this counsel: "If you ignore your duty as a wife and a mother and hold out your hands for the Lord to put another class of work in them, be sure that He will not contradict Himself; He points you to the duty you have to do at home. If you have the idea that some work greater and holier than this has been entrusted to you, you are under a deception." The Adventist Home, p. 245.

In conclusion we may state that we find a model for the home in the Scriptures where both parents have an important responsibility in bringing up the children. Mothers are nevertheless to have a particular role and "to be busy at home" (Titus 2:5), or keepers at home, thus fulfilling a role in which no one else can replace her. It is difficult to see how the church can avoid a conflict of priorities if it lays upon a mother the responsibility of full-time service through ordination to the pastoral ministry.

The counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy underline the Biblical teaching on this point, putting family obligations first in the case of a mother. We may here be at the core of the question as to why the Scriptures have so little to say about women in pastoral ministry. The absence of explicit Bible teaching on this point is probably significant. But it does not in any way depreciate the value of the work of women in the church. Ministry is more than the pastoral ministry to which ordination sets a person apart. As we have seen already, the Biblical concept of ministry is very broad, and there is in it a very definite place for dedicated women.

WOMEN IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY--PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

There is general agreement in the church that there is a desperate need for the service of women. There are many lines of ministry where a woman's contribution is practically indispensable. But the assertion that the possibilities for women's ministry are limitless requires some modification.

According to the New Testament women were involved in many different types of ministry during the time of Jesus. This continued in the early church. Ellen White also emphasizes that there is a role for women in ministry.²⁸ "Women may take their places in the work at this crisis, and He will work through them - their labour is needed."²⁹ What areas of ministry, then, are women encouraged to enter? Let us look at a few points.

The Husband-wife Team

As a church we have been admonished to have the gospel minister and his wife working together. The wife can accomplish a great work in such a team--a work that no one else may do as well. "They (the wives) can open the Scripture to souls in such a way as to bring light to minds in darkness-- There are women who are especially adapted for the work of giving Bible readings, and they are very successful in presenting the word of God in its simplicity to others. This is a sacred work, and those engaged in it should receive encouragement."³⁰

"The wife can often labour by the side of her husband, accomplishing a noble work".³¹

But there is a practical implication in the counsel of Ellen White that we should not overlook. The wife should in such a case also be paid for her work. "God is a God of justice, and if the ministers receive a salary for their work, their wives who devote themselves just as disinterestedly to the work, should be paid in addition to the wages their husbands receive, even though they may not ask for this."³²

For years Adventist church leaders were happy to get two workers for the price of one. This is still taking place in a number of our conferences. At the same time an increasing number of pastor's wives are engaged in professional work--full-time or part-time--outside of the church, or at our own administrative offices.

²⁸ Ellen G. White, Testimony for the Church, (Mountain View, Cal.: Pacific Press Publishing Ass., 1948), p. 117.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ E.G. White, Medical Ministry, p. 140.

³¹ E.G. White, Evangelism, p. 491.

³² Ibid. p. 492.

A minister in the field whose wife is working outside the church will have less to offer to the church than a pastor with a wife who can use all of her time for the home and the ministry. He will usually need to carry a major share of housework, shopping, baby-sitting, cooking, washing, and similar tasks. At the same time the wife's potentially valuable contribution to the work of the church is lost when she has other work.

The church has here neglected the definite counsel given by the Spirit of Prophecy. "Injustice has sometimes been done to women who labour just as devotedly as their husbands, and who are recognized by God as being necessary to the work of the ministry."³³ Possibly, a change back to the blueprint would in the beginning become a strain on the Conference budget, yet its implementation could create an explosion in the number of people won for Christ.

The question has been asked: How should these pastors' wives be appointed and what kind of title should be given them?

As to the first question it is the conference committee which appoints the minister and assigns him his work in the field. The same procedure should apply in the case of a wife, according to the following recommendation: "Select woman who will act an earnest part"³⁴. The criteria are also mentioned: "The Lord will use intelligent women, who understand the Word, and who have ability to teach."³⁵

Their title may not be too important. But considering that she will be assisting a pastor or an evangelist, one possibility would be to use terms like "assistant pastor" or "assistant evangelist." No doubt other suitable alternatives could also be thought of.

This matter should not be neglected any longer. It is my conviction that such team ministry would bring many advantages, both to the ministerial couple and the church. In one of the Danish conferences we have such a team where both husband and wife are employed by the conference. In an interview with them a number of advantages of this model of ministry came to light, and I shall summarize some of their statements:

1. As a family we can both work and fellowship together, and we enjoy each other's company.
2. Sharing happy experiences build enthusiasm and increase the joy of service. Being able to share difficult experiences creates mutual encouragement and gives strength to bear them.
3. Such a team gives the church two persons with different talents and gifts that can complement each other. Both on questions of theology and in practical ministry this gives the church a richer resource to draw from. The wife, with her softening influence, is able to reach many, especially among the women, whom the husband alone could not reach--at least not as effectively.

33 Ibid. p. 492.

34 Ibid. p. 491.

35 Ibid .

4. In evangelism, the combined talents give strength to soul-winning. The pulpit ministry becomes so much more effective when a wife gets to know the interested ones at the door of the church and in the homes. The wife has been especially effective in giving Bible studies in the home, and this pastor has experienced the truth of Ellen White's saying: "Who can represent the truth and the example of Christ better than Christian women who themselves are practicing the truth?"³⁶
5. This couple also underlined the necessity of having an open house where young people in the church may feel at home. Training of young people takes place every week in this home, and includes preparation for baptism, preparing for marriage or teaching of other vital subjects. This would have been so much more difficult to carry through if the couple worked separated from each other.
6. A final point underscored the advantage of this combined ministry as trust and confidence in one of the person "rubbed off" on the other as well. Their combined work, in other words, added up to more than twice of what one person alone might accomplish.

The Single Woman and Ministry

So far we have been talking about a married woman and ministry. What about single women? Some have argued that the single woman who is without any family obligations well might carry on ministerial work of the same nature as a male minister and that there should be no objection to ordination in this case.

First of all it is well to remember that single, male pastors generally have been strongly advised to marry. There are good reasons for this. One aspect is the fact that marriage (or some other partnership) is the "normal" pattern in society. Only a minority stay single. A single, male minister may also feel a certain amount of pressure from the unmarried women in the congregation. He has, furthermore, certain limitations in ministry to women when he does not have a wife at his side.

The minister with his wife (and children) also may serve an important function in modeling the Christian family before his congregation. It has been stated that, "The happiness of men and women and the success of the church depend upon home influence. Eternal interests are involved in the proper discharge of the every-day duties of life. The world is not so much in need of great minds, as of good men, who are a blessing in their homes".³⁷ In other words, a minister with a family seems to have more to offer than a single minister. As we noticed earlier in the paper, to be "as a father in Christ Jesus" for someone to imitate, seems to be an important function of a minister.

There is no question that a pastor serves as a role model to his congregation. The pastor without a spouse and children will most likely be less able to model and inspire other families. So from the very outset the single minister has a limitation. This would, of course, be the same both for

³⁶ Ibid. p. 467.

³⁷ Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers, p. 204.

single female and single male ministers. In both cases we understand the underlying reason why elders who are ordained to govern the church, should be heads of families who are capable to rule their own household (1 Tim 3:5).

Finally there is another burden on a single minister. Any minister experiences considerable psychological strain. The single minister has no one to help him share this burden and loneliness may, in this situation, become a serious problem. Not that the married minister will violate his pledge to hold certain matters in confidence by discussing everything with his spouse, but he will have the general psychological support of a marriage partner at his side, which is a great asset.

Some years ago one of the European conferences hired a capable woman, ordained as an elder from U.S.A. She was called out as a pastor for one of the churches in the conference. She was well accepted, presented good sermons, was effective in visitation and on the whole performed very well. However, after a couple of years she could not take it any longer. The burden of counseling and the heavy strain of problem-solving became too much for her. She stated frankly, "I have no one at home to share my inner mind with. Being alone in the ministry does not work".

The Lutheran female minister whom I interviewed gave a similar response on this point: "If it were not for my husband, an officer in the Salvation Army who understands the mechanism of ministry, and with whom I can share both traumatic and none-traumatic experiences, I would not be able to stay in the ministry". A single person as a shepherd of the flock will be at a distinct disadvantage, and why should a Church put such a burden on a person?

A Supportive Ministry

It seems to me that it is in the role of a supportive ministry that both single and married women may fill a vital role that men cannot fulfill at all, or at least not as well. This type of ministry may take a variety of forms and it is an area where a woman may serve whether she is a wife and mother or chooses to remain single.

For several years I had the privilege to have on the evangelistic team female Bible Instructors. I observed over and over again the truthfulness of Ellen White's statement: "They (the women) can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labour is needed."³⁸

In this labour Ellen White refers to the need to combine talents, where men and women work together, the women in home missionary work, as an adviser, counselor, gospel teacher, a gospel visitor, and a preacher.³⁹

There are women who are especially gifted in the work of giving Bible studies and have access into the homes, and Ellen White underlined how important their work is in these meaningful questions: "Who can have so deep a love for the souls of men and women for whom Christ has died as those who are partakers of His grace? Who can represent the truth and the example of Christ better than Christian women who themselves are practicing the

³⁸ Ellen G. White, Evangelism, p. 464.465.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 464-472.

truth?"⁴⁰

There should be no need for further elaboration on these points. The statements from the Spirit of Prophecy that have been mentioned, and many others that could be referred to, are very clear. There is no doubt that women not only may have, but rather that they must have a vital role in the work of ministry if the church is to minister according to God's purposes. But the church faces at least two practical issues that must be dealt with:

1. Is it wise for the church to place demands on a woman that may imply that she ought to choose celibacy in order to fulfill her obligations in the ministry? The question is pertinent as the church today, as may interpret it, is sending signals that the route of ordination of women is more likely to be taken than the alternative of a supportive ministry.
2. How can more women be appointed to meaningful tasks of ministry, receive the remuneration they deserve, and at the same time be free to function, when they so wish and need to, in the most uplifted position ever given to a woman--that of being a mother?

To go further into these questions is beyond the assignment of this paper, but these are questions the church should address. It seems to me that this will be more fruitful than to force women into a leadership role, which according to theological studies so far, does not seem to find explicit support in Scripture.

CONCLUSION

Both on the basis of theological and sociological considerations we find within the Seventh-day Adventist church today, a considerable divergence of viewpoints on the question of ordination of women to the gospel ministry. This paper has attempted, from an ecclesiological viewpoint, to look at some of the practical implications of full-time ministry for women. In reviewing this we have become aware of a number of issues that we have also tried to relate to the model for the family and the role of women that is presented in the Bible and underlined by the Spirit of Prophecy.

We find that the leadership ministry in its very essence has an element of demand that certainly will clash with family obligations. The leadership ministry implies a commitment to serve whenever and wherever God commands. Based on our understanding of the Scriptures on this point, the Manual for Ministers, therefore underlines that the minister has a primary responsibility to serve the church.

To place a woman in such a ministry may lead to a detrimental conflict of loyalties. If she takes the ordination vow seriously she may be drawn to neglect her other important service to the church, that of being a mother in a Christian home, one of the building blocks of the church and society. It does not seem to be God's plan that she should be asked to do both of these at the same time. The experience of women in ministry gives support to this.

The leadership ministry involves being an example, a role model for the

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 466.467.

congregation. In this task a single minister has obvious limitations because he cannot be a model of the most important institution God has created, namely the family. Paul emphasizes the importance of this when he counsels that elders who are ordained to govern the church, should be heads of families who are capable to rule their own household.⁴¹

The considerations of this paper lead rather to support for the model of a complementary and supportive ministry for women. This finds support in the New Testament and in the Spirit of Prophecy. We are encouraged to use the talent of women in ministry and are told that there "should be twenty women where now there is one."⁴²

When a woman is free to remain single or choose to become a wife and a mother she may also, according to the opportunities she has, minister either to individuals or to families, presenting the gospel and leading people to Jesus Christ. A minister's wife should, be given opportunity, and be encouraged to, to share in a supportive ministry with her husband.

The church also must develop a plan for adequate and fair remuneration to all these categories of women and give them the status they deserve. It has often been said that there is no budget for such a plan. This is a problem that can be solved, providing we become convinced that this is according to the divine plan. And it cannot be argued that it will be less expensive to go the route of ordaining women to the ministry. We must be careful not to attempt to repair old mistakes by committing new ones.

The work of ministry belongs to the whole church. There is a great variety of ministries and all are important.⁴³ The Spirit appoints as he wills and we should recognize and make room for the operation of all of the gifts of the Spirit. We should not restrict, or fail to appreciate, any ministry that God places in the church.

No doubt we have often erred with respect to the women in the church, not giving full recognition to their contribution. Because of this failure we have lost many blessings. Fortunately we are today ready to more fully recognize the value of the dedicated ministry of women. It is important now to make practical plans so that they may have opportunity to serve as the Lord calls them. To accomplish this may be more important than to come to a final conclusion in the discussion about ordination. But if the discussion about ordination will have helped us to more fully appreciate the role of women in the church it will have been of great benefit, no matter what understanding the church in the end arrives at.

⁴¹ Cf. 1 Tim 3:4

⁴² Ellen G. White, Evangelism, (Washington, D.C. 1946), p. 472.

⁴³ Cf. 1 Cor. 12.