

AN INQUIRY INTO  
THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE SDA CHURCH

A mail survey  
conducted by

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Revised With Additional Data

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## INTRODUCTION

The survey reported here was assigned by Robert H. Pierson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, as a part of an on-going investigation into the attitudes of Adventists in North America concerning a number of significant and troublesome issues that face the church's leadership.

The first stage was conducted during the spring of 1977 and consisted of an inquiry among the resident members of the General Conference Committee to learn what they perceived to be the attitudes of various groups of Adventists "in the field." Those groups were: leading laymen, pastors, conference administrators, heads of institutions, and youth.

This survey deals with just one of the topics covered in the initial investigation: the role of women in the church. The five groups listed above, plus a large number of women, were asked to respond to six questions--three concerning women as local elders and three concerning women as pastors.

Questionnaires sent out numbered 956. At the date of cutoff, 654 usable responses (or 68.4%) had been returned. The results and interpretations that follow are based on these 654 responses. A description of the 654 respondents appears at the end of this report (Table 9). A sample questionnaire follows.

Table 3A

## RESPONSE BY AGE AND SEX

(N=622)

## Item 1

Woman as Local Elder

Frequency Distribution  
(expressed as percentages)A T T I T U D E

<u>AGE</u>		<u>Unfavorable (0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral (4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable (7-10)</u>
16-	M	24.3	24.3	51.4
25	F	23.5	9.8	66.7
26-	M	41.4	22.4	36.2
35	F	31.9	19.2	48.9
36-	M	51.2	13.7	35.1
55	F	56.3	14.3	29.4
56	M	53.0	16.7	30.3
and up	F	55.1	17.4	27.5

Table 4A

FEMALE SABBATH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS  
 (N=43)  
 WIVES OF LOCAL ELDERS  
 (N=39)  
 WIVES OF PASTORS AND EVANGELISTS  
 (N=100)  
 WIVES OF CONFERENCE/UNION OFFICERS  
 (N=25)

Items 1, 3, 5

Women as Local Elders

Frequency Distribution  
 (expressed as percentages)

A T T I T U D E

<u>Item</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u> <u>(0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral</u> <u>(4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable</u> <u>(7-10)</u>
1 SSS	60.5	18.6	20.9
WLE	56.4	15.4	28.2
WPE	52.0	10.0	38.0
WO	52.0	8.0	40.0
3 SSS	55.8	18.6	25.6
WLE	61.5	10.3	28.2
WPE	53.0	12.0	35.0
WO	52.0	12.0	36.0
5 SSS	58.1	9.3	32.6
WLE	53.8	15.4	30.8
WPE	48.0	16.0	36.0
WO	56.0	12.0	32.0

Groups Surveyed With  
Number Mailed and Number Returned

<u>Group Surveyed</u>	<u>Est. No. in North America</u>	<u>Number Mailed</u>	<u>Number Returned</u>	<u>Return as % of Pop.</u>	<u>Returns % of Mailing</u>
Lay Leaders	25,802	300	230	0.9%	76.7%
Pastors & Evang.	3,000	150	121	4.0%	80.7%
Wives of Pastors and Evangelists	3,000	150	100	3.3%	66.7%
Conference and Union Presidents	71	24	33	46.5%	137.5%
Wives of Conference and Union Presidents	71	24	25	35.2%	104.2%
Bible Instructors	150	50	12 e	8.0%	24.0% e
Heads of Institutions	156	52	43	27.6%	86.0%
Youth	38,000 e	<u>206</u>	<u>90 e</u>	0.2%	43.7%
Totals		956	654		68.4%

e - estimated

AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE ROLE OF WOMEN  
IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

May we have five minutes of your time?

Your opinions are valuable to us.

This brief questionnaire will take only a few minutes to complete.  
Please fill it out yourself. Do not pass it along to someone else.  
We want your opinions.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope has been provided for your convenience in returning the completed questionnaire to Office of the President, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20012.

Please respond within 48 hours.

DIRECTIONS:

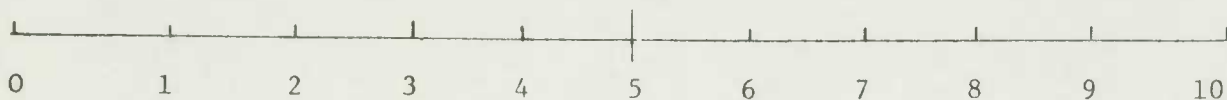
Consider each of the following questions carefully. Although they are similar, there are important differences in wording. Answer all items.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE  
SDA CHURCH

Part I. On each blank at the right, place a number from 0 to 10 based on the scale at the bottom of the page. If you are uncertain how you feel about the question, you may wish to put down a "5" (neutral).

1. In general, how do you feel about the election of a woman to carry the responsibilities of a local elder in her congregation? \_\_\_\_\_ (10)
2. In general, how do you feel about the appointment of an experienced and trained woman to pastoral responsibilities? \_\_\_\_\_ (12)
3. How do you feel about the ordination of a woman who has been duly elected as a local elder? \_\_\_\_\_ (14)
4. How do you feel about the ordination of a woman who has been duly appointed to pastoral responsibilities and has fulfilled the prerequisites for ordination as a minister? \_\_\_\_\_ (16)
5. How would you feel if your congregation elected a woman to serve as one of the local elders? \_\_\_\_\_ (18)
6. How would you feel if your conference committee appointed a woman as pastor of your congregation? \_\_\_\_\_ (20)

Very Unfavorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Neutral	Somewhat Favorable	Very Favorable
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Part II. Check all categories that apply to you

- \_\_\_\_ (26) Denominational employee
- \_\_\_\_ (27) Wife of denominational employee
- \_\_\_\_ (28) Full-time student
- \_\_\_\_ (29) Local elder
- \_\_\_\_ (30) Sabbath School superintendent
- \_\_\_\_ (31) School board member
- \_\_\_\_ (32) Other church officer (which? \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_ (33) Wife of local elder
- \_\_\_\_ (34) Member of local conference committee
- \_\_\_\_ (35) Member of lay advisory committee
- \_\_\_\_ (36) Male
- \_\_\_\_ (37) Female
- \_\_\_\_ (38) Pastor
- \_\_\_\_ (39) Evangelist
- \_\_\_\_ (40) Wife of pastor or evangelist
- \_\_\_\_ (41) Conference or union officer
- \_\_\_\_ (42) Wife of conference or union officer
- \_\_\_\_ (43) Institutional administrator

Age (44)      \_\_\_\_\_ 16-25      26-35 \_\_\_\_\_

                 \_\_\_\_\_ 36-55      56 and above \_\_\_\_\_

Part III. Remarks. Further comments are appreciated.

## SURVEY RESULTS

An overview of the results (Chart 1) shows that (1) the attitudes cluster at the extreme ends of the favorable-unfavorable scale, and (2) more respondents feel unfavorable than favorable toward wider service for women at 5 to 4, 5 to 3, and 5 to 2 ratios. The respondents showed less favor toward ordination than toward service without ordination; more reluctance to accept a woman pastor in one's own church than a woman local elder; and more readiness to favor women as local elders than as pastors.

Among the various groups of respondents that were analyzed, it was found that whether denominationally employed or not, whether in this position or that, the subgroups had about the same attitude patterns--with one notable exception, the institutional administrators. However, age and sex have a considerable bearing upon the pattern of response. In other words, any of the following tables that do not show age and sex breakdowns tend to look alike and tell about the same story.

Those who express the highest degree of favorability toward offering wider areas of service for women are women, ages 16-35; young men, ages 16-25 and some older; and the heads of institutions.

Before we go into more detail, let us look at how the results have been analyzed and reported:

The six questions on the role of women in the church were arranged in the questionnaire in an attempt to prevent having one question bias the response to another. That sequence resulted in an alternating of questions on the two roles of women--in the local church and in the pastoral ministry. This report alters that sequence so that all questions about a woman as a local elder (items 1, 3, and 5) are presented together, and all questions about a woman as a pastor (items 2, 4, and 6) are presented together.

In order to give a simple yet accurate picture of the responses, which ranged from "0" (very unfavorable) to "10" (very favorable), I have grouped the 11 possible responses into three categories:

Responses 0-3	Unfavorable
Responses 4-6	Neutral
Responses 7-10	Favorable

#### ANALYSIS OF TABLES

Table 1 summarizes all 654 responses. The top half of the table deals with women as local elders. Nearly half the respondents (47.7%) disfavor the ordination of women as local elders (item 3). Slightly fewer (45.4%) dislike the idea of women in the role of a local elder (item 1). And still fewer (42.3%) are opposed to having a woman serve as local elder in their own church. In summary, from about 2 to 12 per cent more respondents oppose women as local elders than favor that role.

The lower half of the table deals with women in pastoral positions. Here the opposition is greater, ranging from 49.8% to 56.7% on items 2, 4, and 6. Whereas there was less opposition to a woman serving as a local elder in one's own church than to her ordination or to the idea in general, the matter of having a woman as one's pastor drew the highest level of disfavor (56.7%), with ordination to the ministry showing a little less opposition at 53.8%.

In the overall picture, half the respondents expressed disfavor with increasing the role of women in the church in the area of local elders and ministers, one sixth were neutral, and about one third favored opening the way for women to serve as elders or pastors. About 40% were favorable or very favorable to having a woman local elder in their own church.

Chart 1 shows the relative frequencies (percentages expressed as decimal fractions) of responses to all six questions by the first group of respondents. Here the response categories are all given, from 0 to 10. This series of bar graphs shows clearly that (1) those who were opposed chose "very unfavorable" (0) and those who favored a larger role for women chose "very favorable" (10) producing a polarized response pattern; and (2) the pattern of acceptance of these innovations regarding women would be:

A woman local elder in my own church (pilot congregations)  
(item 5)

Women as local elders generally (item 1)

Women in pastoral positions generally (item 2)

Women ordained as local elders (item 3)

Women ordained as ministers (item 4)

A woman as a pastor in my own church (item 6)

Table 2 shows the questionnaire responses by sex. There is not a great deal of difference shown between men's and women's responses except that women tended to be more unfavorable than men toward having a local elder in their own church or having women pastors at all. The women also usually gave fewer neutral answers. In this table and other tables where women's responses are given separately, it is sometimes the case that the closer the situation comes to the woman respondent, the more likely she is to disfavor the idea. This touches on what social psychologists call "social distance." Most people are not strongly opposed to something they may dislike until it comes close to them socially.

Table 3 is presented in six parts, one table for the responses to each of the six items. These tables show both age and sex breakdown on the

left. Young women, ages 16 to 25, are highly favorable to all three items pertaining to women as local elders (Tables 3A, 3B, and 3C). They are also favorable to having women as pastors (Tables 3D, 3E, and 3F). The large majority of young women favor having women in new roles as opposed to being unfavorable to such innovations.

In the second age bracket more women favor than disfavor in all categories pertaining to women as local elders. In the matter of women as pastors, the women respondents, while slightly favoring the general idea of the woman as a pastor, were evenly divided on the matter of ordination of women as pastors, but were decidedly against having a woman as their own pastor.

Young men, ages 16 to 25, also gave more favorable responses than unfavorable ones on the matter of women as local elders, but their responses were not as strongly in favor as the women of the same age. They also slightly favored women as pastors, even ordained, and serving in their own church. Men respondents of ages 26 to 35 gave about the same answers as men of the older age groups, although in some items they showed a somewhat higher level of acceptance.

The greatest reluctance to change is seen in the two upper age groups, from 36 up, with an interesting characteristic showing up occasionally that the older age group, from 56 up, sometimes is less conservative than the age group 36 to 55.

Tables 4A and 4B show the responses of four subgroups of women: female Sabbath school superintendents, wives of local elders, wives of pastors and evangelists, and wives of conference/union officers. Table 4A deals with items 1, 3, and 5 on local elders, and Table 4B deals with items 2, 4, and 6 on the pastorate. Female Sabbath school superintendents gave quite strong unfavorable responses in all categories. It may be conjectured

that these women do not wish to work closely with another woman over them, as a local elder or pastor would be. It is interesting to note that female Sabbath school superintendents nearly always were more opposed to a wider role for women in the church than the wives of local elders or the wives of pastors and evangelists, the two groups of women surveyed who would have the most potential concern about interpersonal relationships between men and women in the church. It is also interesting to note that the wives of conference/union officers are often more opposed to a wider role for women than the wives of the other category of denominational workers, pastors and evangelists. The same kind of difference is seen among their husbands as will be seen in Tables 5 and 6: pastors and evangelists have much less objection to the wider role for women in the church than do conference and union officers. The majority of the wives of pastors and evangelists were either neutral or favorable to the idea of a woman serving as a local elder in their own church. In fact, wives of pastors and evangelists often gave the largest percentages of favorable responses as compared with the other three groups of women.

In Table 5, although pastors and evangelists gave more unfavorable responses than favorable ones, it can be seen that only in the matter of the ordination of a woman as a pastor and the matter of her serving in one's own church, did the unfavorable responses exceed the 50% level. In fact, 60% of the pastors and evangelists who responded were either neutral or favorable to the idea of having a woman elder in their own church. These, of course, are the men who would be most directly involved in working with women as local elders.

Table 6 shows the strong opposition of conference and union officers to the ordination of women either as local elders or as pastors. There is also

a high unfavorable response to being a member of a congregation with a woman as a pastor. However, the majority of conference and union officers (51.1%) are either neutral or favorable to the idea of having a woman local elder in their own church, and nearly 50% (48.5%) are neutral or favor the idea of women local elders in general.

Table 7, reporting on the responses of institutional administrators, is sharply different from the other tables. With 43 persons responding, half gave favorable responses in all categories. A high level of favorable responses, as is true in some other tables, shows up in regard to having a woman local elder in one's own church.

Table 8 gives a comparison of denominational employees and lay leaders. The lay leaders apparently are more unfavorable toward the larger role of women than are denominational employees. On item 4 there was almost exact agreement. Once again, high levels of favorable responses came in the matter of having a woman local elder in one's own church. Another interesting result is that in most items denominational employees gave more neutral responses than lay leaders. That would seem to indicate that lay leaders are more opinionated or less open to change than denominational employees.

Table 1

## TOTAL RESPONSE

(N=654)

Items 1-6

## Frequency Distribution\*

(expressed as percentages)

<u>Item</u>	<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
	<u>Unfavorable</u> <u>(0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral</u> <u>(4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable</u> <u>(7-10)</u>
1	45.4	16.8	37.8
3	47.7	16.8	35.5
5	42.3	17.4	40.1
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2	49.8	17.9	32.1
4	53.8	15.6	30.6
6	56.7	17.4	25.9

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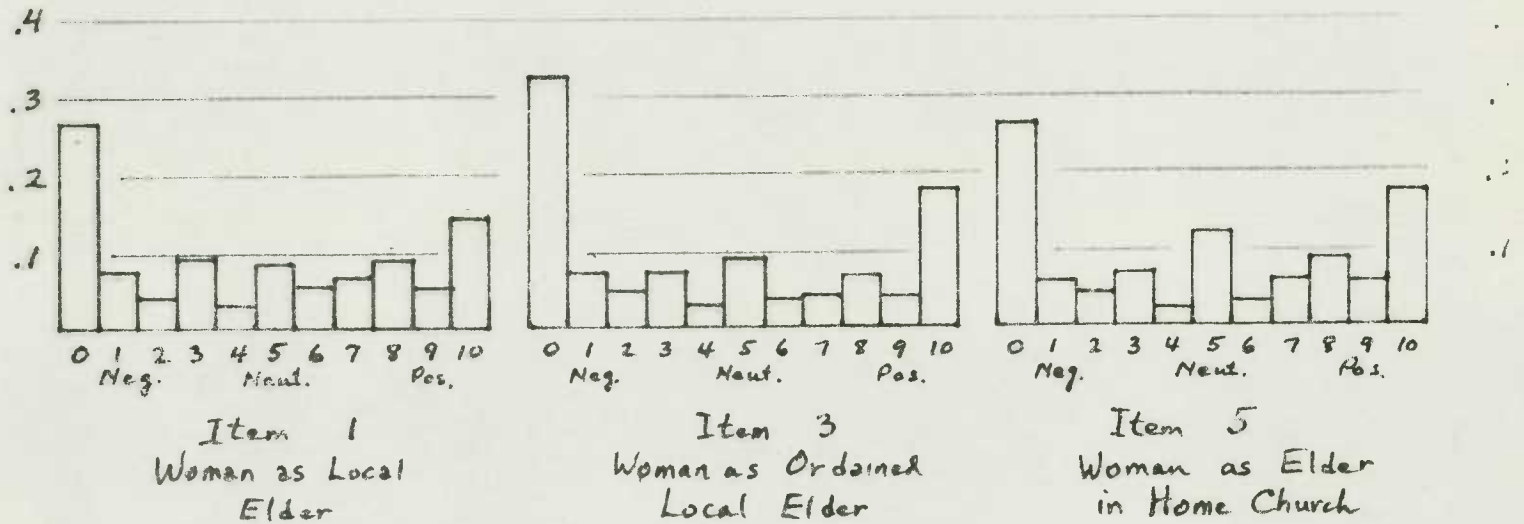
\* Add 0.2 to distribution in Items 2 and 5 for "no response."

Chart 1

# ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH 562 RESPONSES

Relative Frequencies

## Women as Local Elders



## Women in Pastoral Positions

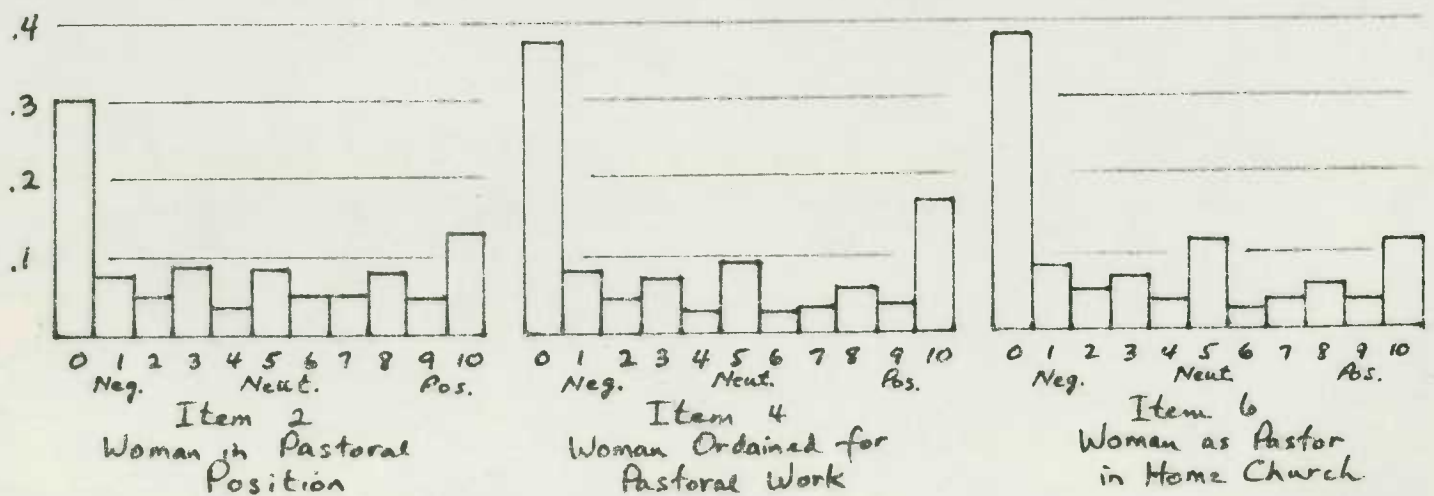


Table 2

## RESPONSES BY SEX

(Male - N=335)  
 (Female - N=295)  
 (Sex Not  
 Given - N=24)

Items 1 - 6

Frequency Distribution  
 (expressed as percentages)

A T T I T U D E

<u>Item</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u> <u>(0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral</u> <u>(4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable</u> <u>(7-10)</u>
1 M	43.3	18.8	37.9
1 F	46.4	14.9	38.7
3 M	45.1	18.5	36.4
3 F	49.2	15.9	34.9
5 M	39.1	19.7	41.2
5 F*	44.4	15.9	39.4
-----			
2 M	47.2	20.0	32.8
2 F*	52.2	15.6	31.9
4 M	52.6	14.6	32.8
4 F	54.2	17.3	28.5
6 M	54.0	17.3	28.7
6 F	59.0	18.3	22.7

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\* One item not answered

Table 3B

## RESPONSE BY AGE AND SEX

(N=622)

## Item 3

Woman as Ordained Local ElderFrequency Distribution  
(expressed as percentages)

		<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
<u>AGE</u>		<u>Unfavorable</u> <u>(0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral</u> <u>(4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable</u> <u>(7-10)</u>
16-	M	25.7	29.7	44.6
25	F	29.4	13.7	56.9
26-	M	41.4	25.9	32.7
35	F	36.2	21.3	42.5
36-	M	55.0	8.4	36.6
55	F	60.3	16.7	23.0
56	M	51.5	18.2	30.3
and up	F	52.2	13.0	34.8

Table 3C

## RESPONSE BY AGE AND SEX

(N=622)

## Item 5

Woman as Home-Church Local Elder

Frequency Distribution  
(expressed as percentages)

		<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
<u>AGE</u>		<u>Unfavorable (0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral (4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable (7-10)</u>
16-	M	20.3	18.9	60.8
25	F	19.6	11.8	68.6
26-	M	36.2	20.7	43.1
35	F	27.7	21.3	51.0
36-	M	47.3	18.3	34.4
55	F	54.8	14.3	30.9
56	M	48.5	19.7	31.8
and up	F*	55.1	18.8	24.6

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\* Item left blank by one respondent

Table 3D  
 RESPONSE BY AGE AND SEX  
 (N=622)

Item 2

Woman in Pastoral Work

Frequency Distribution  
 (expressed as percentages)

		<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
<u>AGE</u>		<u>Unfavorable</u> (0-3)	<u>Neutral</u> (4-6)	<u>Favorable</u> (7-10)
16-	M	32.4	20.3	47.3
25	F	27.4	15.7	56.9
26-	M	48.3	24.1	27.6
35	F	40.4	17.0	42.6
36-	M	51.2	17.5	31.3
55	F	62.7	14.3	23.0
56	M	56.1	19.7	24.2
and up	F*	59.4	17.4	21.7

---

\* Item left blank by one respondent

Table 3E  
 RESPONSE BY AGE AND SEX  
 (N=622)

Item 4

Woman as Ordained Minister

Frequency Distribution  
 (expressed as percentages)

		<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
<u>AGE</u>		<u>Unfavorable (0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral (4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable (7-10)</u>
16-	M	35.1	18.9	46.0
25	F	25.5	19.6	54.9
26-	M	51.7	19.0	29.3
35	F	42.6	14.8	42.6
36-	M	59.5	8.4	32.1
55	F	67.5	15.1	17.4
55	M	60.6	16.7	22.7
and up	F	59.4	21.7	18.9

Table 3F  
 RESPONSE BY AGE AND SEX  
 (N=622)

Item 6  
 Woman as Home-Church Pastor

Frequency Distribution  
 (expressed as percentages)

		<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
<u>AGE</u>		<u>Unfavorable (0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral (4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable (7-10)</u>
16-	M	39.2	18.9	41.9
25	F	29.4	19.6	51.0
26-	M	58.6	20.7	20.7
35	F	55.3	19.2	25.5
36-	M	59.5	14.5	26.0
55	F	69.8	15.9	14.3
56	M	57.6	16.7	25.7
and up	F	63.8	21.7	14.5

Table 4B

FEMALE SABBATH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS  
(N=43)  
WIVES OF LOCAL ELDERS  
(N=39)  
WIVES OF PASTORS AND EVANGELISTS  
(N=100)  
WIVES OF CONFERENCE/UNION OFFICERS  
(N=25)

Items 2, 4, 6

Women in Pastoral Positions

Frequency Distribution  
(expressed as percentages)

A T T I T U D E

<u>Item</u>		<u>Unfavorable</u> (0-3)	<u>Neutral</u> (4-6)	<u>Favorable</u> (7-10)
2	SSS	65.1	16.3	18.6
	WLE	64.1	12.8	23.1
	WPE	55.0	13.0	32.0
	WO	60.0	28.0	12.0
4	SSS	60.5	23.2	16.3
	WLE	61.5	18.0	20.5
	WPE	61.0	15.0	24.0
	WO	64.0	16.0	20.0
6	SSS	69.8	13.9	16.3
	WLE	66.7	20.5	12.8
	WPE	68.0	14.0	18.0
	WO	68.0	24.0	8.0

Table 5

## PASTORS AND EVANGELISTS

(N=121)

Items 1 -6

Frequency Distribution  
(expressed as percentages)

<u>Item</u>	<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
	<u>Unfavorable (0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral (4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable (7-10)</u>
1	42.2	22.3	35.5
3	47.1	19.8	33.1
5	39.7	21.5	38.8
-----			
2	45.4	21.5	33.1
4	57.8	14.1	28.1
6	57.8	17.4	24.8

Table 6

## CONFERENCE AND UNION OFFICERS

(N=33)

Items 1 - 6

Frequency Distribution  
(expressed as percentages)

<u>Item</u>	<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
	<u>Unfavorable (0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral (4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable (7-10)</u>
1	51.5	27.3	21.2
3	66.7	9.1	24.2
5	48.5	30.3	21.2
-----			
2	54.6	24.2	21.2
4	72.7	3.0	24.3
6	69.7	15.2	15.1

Table 7

## INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

(N=43)

Items 1 - 6

Frequency Distribution  
(expressed as percentages)

<u>Item</u>	<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
	<u>Unfavorable (0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral (4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable (7-10)</u>
1	32.5	16.3	51.2
3	32.6	11.6	55.8
5	25.6	20.9	53.5
-----			
2	27.9	23.3	48.8
4	32.5	16.3	51.2
6	32.6	18.6	48.8

Table 8

DENOMINATIONAL EMPLOYEES (N=273)

and

LAY LEADERS (N=230)

Frequency Distribution  
(expressed as percentages)

		<u>A T T I T U D E</u>		
<u>Item</u>		<u>Unfavorable (0-3)</u>	<u>Neutral (4-6)</u>	<u>Favorable (7-10)</u>
1	DE	45.1	19.0	35.9
	LL	52.6	13.5	33.9
3	DE	47.6	17.2	35.2
	LL	53.0	12.6	34.4
5	DE*	40.6	20.9	38.2
	LL	50.4	14.8	34.8
-----				
2	DE*	48.3	20.5	30.8
	LL	57.8	16.5	25.7
4	DE	56.8	14.3	28.9
	LL	57.0	16.5	26.5
6	DE	56.4	19.4	24.2
	LL	64.3	15.7	20.0

\* Item left blank by one respondent

Table 9

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

(N=654)

Number of Respondents  
in Each Demographic  
Category

Denominational employee	273
Wife of denomination employee	117
Student	117
Local elder	113
Sabbath school superintendent	72
School Board	118
Other church office	213
Wife of local elder	39
Conference Committee	51
Lay Advistory Committee	32
Male	335
Female	295
Pastor	126
Evangelist	20
Pastor/Evangelist's wife	100
Officer	33
Officer's wife	25
Institutional administrator	43

Age

16-25	125
26-35	107
36-55	267
56 and up	141

Comments were made by 342 or 52.3% of the respondents.

## C O M M E N T S

### Women's Role in the SDA Church

#### CHURCH LEADERSHIP DECISIONS ON ORDINATION ACCEPTED

- 79 I would accept the decision of the conference but it would be a struggle. Let the men assume and keep their proper place.
- 84 If in the local church or the conference level women were ordained as elder or minister, I would go along with the majority decision- however, I am no woman's libber in my own right.
- 154 I will accept the decision of the executive committee. I have experienced women in departmental leadership and am not opposed to women speaking, But am opposed to ordination.
- 184 I have no contention over this matter. Since it is under discussion I am quiet happy to abide by the G.C. committee's decision and am sure other consecrated Christ-like men and women will be content with this decision.
- 206 I feel that a woman as an elder or pastor would probably cause more problems or misunderstandings than a man in the same position. But if the church or conference elected or appointed her, I would support her the best I could.
- 260 I would not resist the decisions concerning election of women to positions as elders though I would not promote such a move. As far as ordination to the conference leaders, however, within my own self I would feel uneasy about such a trend for no better reason then the fact that it is associated in my mind with the growing apostacy in other denominations. Not, of course, that spiritual women would cause apostacy, but rather because in the minds of some people this may appear as a let-down of bible standards and may cause even a further liberal attitude towards accepting wordly patterns and models as our guidelines. This might be considered as a very radical move by many members of the congregation.
- 281 If after heart, searching and prayer, the conference committee appointed a woman that was ordained, I as a faithful church member would accept it, but not saction it.
- 285 Since I am a person who does not easily adjust to change I would be uncertain of my feeling exactly but once a decision has been made by higher officials I would abide by it.

## C O M M E N T S

### Women's Role in the SDA Church

#### PRESENT CHURCH CLIMATE

- 13 I feel that the ordination of women to the position of pastor or Elder would cause a split in our church even as it has in other denominations. Ellen White was given to us a Prophet, but God entrusted the leadership of our church to men. I feel this is still His will.
- 20 I am somewhat reticent to advise the use of women as you have indicated because I feel there are some places a woman could serve effectively; they are the exception and not the rule. I have no question some could do well if the Holy Spirit fitted them for the work, but the climate in the field is not right for a widespread use of women elders and pastors.
- 76 I do not feel that the ordination of women as pastors is in order because we are a world wide church. What may be acceptable in the U.S., may be considered as apostasy by the rest of the world field.
- 78 We are not ready for this now, if ever. Jesus had close women friends but they weren't His disciples in the apostatic sense. If it was culture or tradition, He didn't seem to worry about the Pharisees tradition on other points.
- 121 Have heard much comment pro and con, but as yet have not formulated my own opinion--although the thought itself is not repulsive or does not make me angry. I am, I guess, pretty much neutral. The main objection from my viewpoint to having women as local elders and/or elders would be from the male laity--especially from the more conservative south.
- 142 This is a problem of social acceptance. Some congregations are ready.
- 249 My sentiments against women as church leaders are not the result of a prejudice against women as far as their ability is concerned. I am quite certain that there are women who are most capable of serving in the pastorate. However, the sociological implications make it most unadvisable, at least in most areas. Perhaps in areas which we would consider more "progressive" (?) such as LLU, the idea of a woman in a pastoral role would be less objectionable. In my churches, even the women are opposed to women in the ministry--ie--pastoral role. In fact, they seem to be more vehemently opposed than the men!

## C O M M E N T S

### Women's Role in the SDA Church

#### SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH WOMEN CAN SERVE

- 14 If men are available and willing for Local Elders, I think it would be more suitable than a woman.
- 54 In general I am not in favour of women taking such positions but I recognise that special circumstances may at times warrant this.
- 71 I am not against women being used as leaders in very small groups where there are no qualified men. But otherwise feel women should fill other duties in the church rather than pastoral leadership.
- 102 I feel that it is preferable for a man to be the spiritual leader in the church as God ordained the husband to be the spiritual leader in the family unit. A woman's place is to support the leadership given by the male ministry of the church. In situations where a man cannot be found to fulfill the leadership role then I feel it is appropriate to ask a woman (E.G.--Elen White) It is my understanding that at this time there is no shortage of men to fulfill positions in the ministry. On the contrary I understand that a large number of men recently graduated from the Seminary at Andrews are looking for positions to serve as Pastors.
- 208 I can't see how a woman can be both a mother and a minister. If a woman wanted to dedicate her life entirely to the ministry, without marriage, perhaps there is a place for them in special situations.
- 221 I find no precedent in the Apostolic Church of a woman serving in the capacity of Elder or Minister of a congregation. I also find no evidence of Jesus appointing a woman to these offices, or their equivalent. There may be circumstances where a woman would need to be leader of a church, or small company, but I believe this would be the exception rather than the rule. Even in such a case I do not believe it would be proper to ordain such a one to be Elder or Minister.
- 251 Much would depend on the individual, the church, and the circumstances involved.
- 267 Women may be qualified but I like to see men leading out as far as the ministry. If she is out somewhere where there are no men, then it can become her responsibility. Has the standard of the church changed or is it the same. If its the same why wasn't Sr. Ellen White ordained as a minister? I would really have to pray very very hard to remain in the church to see our congregation taken over by a woman.

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Apparently I was born fifty years too soon to heartily accept women's liberation. I take a dim view of women holding such offices as that of deacon, or elder. And especially that of pastor. When no men are available, or capable, or willing, to act as officers in the church, I feel that women should try to lead out. With the Lord's help. There are many such positions that they can fill successfully. Such as superintendents, secretaries, treasurers, clerks, teachers, etc. We have a very small group here. The lone elder was relieved of his duties several years ago, due to his being apposed to tithing. We have had no elder since.

## COMMENTS

### Women's Role in the SDA Church

#### IMPORTANCE OF QUALIFICATIONS

- 12 God has not limited talents to men; a qualified woman could serve as well as a man.
- 17 I do not see the need of restriction who are qualified and interested from carrying difficult responsibilities. I have a high regard for women's intelligence. The only question I have are to the reaction of people in general and the somewhat militant attitude of modern women's movements.
- 19 One's position should depend on qualifications, character and dedication to the Lord not on sex.
- 28 I personally don't have any objection if it is an experienced and trained woman. But I feel that the woman is in a disadvantage to face certain counseling situations that always fit for a man. Besides that, I wonder what the minister's husband is going to be? Does he have to move to another employment wherever she receives a call? Personally I don't like to see women as first figures and husbands in a secondary position. I don't think it is a nice pattern as an example to the families.
- 45 I believe, that we should use to the utmost, the God given abilities, both of men and women, in any capacity, to the finishing of God's work. May God bless you as you continue to serve Him.
- 53 I would rather to see a mature woman not less than thirty years old.
- 65 God has chosen women to be leaders in the past and in our time. What is important is not the individual but the Spirit of the Lord using the individual for the well being, the spiritual progress of the church.
- 73 Spare us from the "nuts" of any hint of male superiority on the one hand and of an over reaction that will ordain women whose only qualification is womanhood. There must be a middle course in this problem. Good Luck!
- 110 If a woman has the capabilities and shows responsibility, she should be considered for any position, regardless of whether the person is male or remale.

- 126 I think the time is here to accept women as valuable team members in the work of the church, on an equal in decision making and leadership with their brothers in the work. I don't look at this as status seeking, but as utilizing women's full potential. The roles mentioned would not be appropriate for every woman, nor even acceptable to them, just as only a few men are right for these positions in terms of ability, dedication to Christian principles, leadership, etc.
- 140 I would not like to be a Pastor and I would rather have a man as a Pastor, but there are women who would make excellent Pastors and I suppose they should not be denied. I'm just old fashioned enough to believe a good mother and homemaker is the most important role in the world.
- 149 I have answered these questions on a first impression; after giving study to this area and praying about it I might answer differently. I don't have a closed mind on the subject. I do believe that women have a very important work in our church and I feel that if God calls an individual to do a work that we should not stand in the way. However, I don't believe that we should put women in positions just for the sake of women's lib! I do believe that if our church moves toward this that our plan of moving a minister around should be reconsidered, if she is married, what about her husband's work? How would he fit in the picture? I know he'd have to be willing but some jobs are not easy to adapt to a move every 4-5 years or less.
- 155 I feel that if the woman has children at home then that is where she should be! If she has no responsibilities at home then I have no objection! Ordained women I know tend to be very forceful which I object to.
- 183 I approve of women holding these positions only if they are qualified and successful. They should not be Women Libbers!
- 190 Items #1 through #6 should, in my view, be determined on the basis of personal competence and spiritual integrity, not on the person's sex.
- 191 Ministers should be selected on the basis of a call from God coupled with appropriate training and commitment. Sex should only become a factor when congregational resistance would be of such a nature as to make a woman's ministry ineffective in that particular church. Maybe some dedicated women Academy Bible teachers with ministerial licenses would be an appropriate place to break this new ground. I would hire one with the proper qualifications and skills.
- 242 The concern I have about a woman serving as a pastor is due to my concern about the type of woman the conference would employ. After fourteen years in the ministry, almost without (continued on next page)

242 (cont.)

exception the Bible Worker's that are employed by conferences are either extremely unattractive, have marital problems or are single. For some reason conference administrators do not choose as employees the same quality of woman employee, as they do their wives. What I am trying to say, is that are church members would be very turned off toward female pastors if we promoted the same caliber of person that now serves as a Bible Worker into full-time ministry. As a pastor, I can control the quality of my church elders. Only the finest quality of person (man or woman) can serve as an elder. If we understand properly what Paul was talking about, there is really no Biblical objection to women serving as spiritual leaders in our church. However, at this time our work is not attracting the high caliber of individuals (women) that would make good pastors. So I would be opposed to the ordination of women as ministers until such a time as administrative attitudes change. Many of the women that serve as secretary's and Bible workers are just plain dude's. And this is the fault of conference administration. We should be hiring the best, not just what is available.

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This is an issue that only recently I began to give thought to. While I am a little "Old fashioned" at heart and very much satisfied with our male "Elders and Pastors," I must be perfectly honest when expressing my real feelings. I really do not feel that it would be right to deny a person be it male or female, to do a work that he or she truly feels that they are called to do, that in this chosen profession they can be of the greatest service to their Maker. Regardless of sex, each must be so disciplined so as to minister to the needs of each other. God has given to all of us talents and skills. We should be able to use them and make the most of them in the way we feel the Lord would have us to. Why then if a women is "blessed" with these special qualities is she denied the right to fulfill her desires. Does it really make any difference if it is a male or female as long as each is qualified and has been educated and met the prerequisites? I must admit it would take a little while for me to adjust to the change but we find ourselves adjusting to changes in the world today where men are taking over roles or positions held previously only by women. It is my prayer, the Lord will direct our minds in making a decision in this issue and I am ready to accept as He leads.

243

Since women have shown abilities to do much more than they were permitted in the past I believe they should be used to their highest ability to help finish the message to the world and hasten Jesus' coming.

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The reason #4 is marked so favorably is that if a woman has been encouraged to complete the requirements and hold the responsibilities. It is only fair that she should be ordained.

## C O M M E N T S

### Women's Role in the SDA Church

#### WOMEN BELONG IN HOMES

- 10 We must be careful not to disturb the importance of motherhood by creating activity that would take them away from home duties yet remain flexible to plans that will include their talents.
- 100 I pray this will never happen, for I think God did not make us strong as men to carry all kinds of problems in this sin cursed earth. Physically nor mentally, we need to stay home and fulfill our part in rearing our children; for some men can't cope with the problems of this day, and this women's lib needs to be thrown out. I just hope it never happens.
- 197 What happened to the woman God intended us to be? We have the greatest responsibility being a wife and mother! God grant that we remain that way in His church.
- 238 If a woman is pastor, there are times that her family would and should come first. What would happen to the church when she is with child?
- 254 I believe there is no higher office than the queenly work of homemaking. Certainly women do and can do men's usual lines of endeavor with equal capability. But can a man be a "Mother in Israel." I feel that ladies can do this work without the responsibility of the leadership roles noted above.
- 155 (see Importance of qualifications)
- 171 (see Bible or Spirit of Prophecy cited against)

## C O M M E N T S

### Women's Role in the SDA Church

#### NEW ROLES FOR WOMEN APPROVED

- 7 The study of the role of women in the church is much appreciated by many of us. We have long wasted valuable workers because of cultural attitudes towards women. I would like to see pertinent findings published.
- 35 Thank you for this opportunity. We only want to use all talent, even as in Bible times when women were leaders and helped Paul. I have no burden for women to be ordained as pastors, but to be recognized as being capable of performing pastoral duties...
- 70 Give them a try. They can't do any worse than us men!
- 85 I happen to be the pastor of a church where there are several women elders and they have been no problem. In fact they were unanimously approved by the church constituency. I would favor women elders in every church where they were wanted by a majority of the church. I do not believe that the sex of an elder is a theological deterrent to ordination. In other words I know of no theological reason for not ordaining women elders. However, on the basis of the doctrine of the church, I would favor the local congregation making the determination on women elders for itself...
- 94 We had a woman ordained as a minister in our church and she did a splendid job. Her husband was our minister, but I preferred her to him.
- 99 I see nothing "wrong" with having a woman as local elder, ordained; or as a pastor, ordained; but my personal preference for the pastor is a man. Again, I see nothing "wrong" with it at all, and a woman would be fine as an assistant pastor.
- 105 I am not opposed to having women as pastors, or even ordaining them. My reservation lies in the area of a woman visiting everywhere duty calls a pastor to visit any time of the day or night. They would be exposed to unforeseen dangers, especially at night.
- 111 I would be very interested in the results of this survey. I am not at all opposed to using women in the role of pastor, or administration, I am just not convinced that they should be ordained.
- 120 I have a very positive reaction to the appointment of women to positions of responsibility in the church, but I feel that caution should be exercised in not moving too fast in this direction. Often existing circumstances need to guide in these directions.

- 129 I believe the addition of women to positions of responsibility would add spark. Women are as capable as men to carry out the responsibilities of the church.
- 132 As with anything new it would take adjustment on my part to be able to accept a female in the pastoral role. But I could. She would have more to overcome than any new male pastor for all new pastors must earn acceptance from the congregation. More would be expected of her. I hope you realize that how I feel differs from what my informed opinion may be. As to local elders, I have known women who served unofficially in the capacity as local elder. They did a fine conscientious job. I think our female prophet, Ellen White, resoundingly exhibits how God can use females in His service to great benefit.
- 141 It would seem to me that more women might be encouraged to do Bible work. Maybe if more conferences had jobs for them, more might venture out. I am not sure what the problem is. Women are interested in theology - proceed with an advanced education and find no field open and are apparently seeking to make one. Maybe some could be encouraged to go into medical missionary lines and perhaps be used to open new work in dark areas.
- 145 I am not opposed to the ordination of women. For a long time I have wondered why we do not ordain women to the office of deacons!
- 150 I personally have no burden for or against but it would probably add a breath of fresh air to the pastoral ministry.
- 165 I believe that if a woman is capable she should be used. I believe that there are basic differences between the capabilities of men and women. For some jobs a woman would be better, for others, a man. I really feel, that on our committees, etc. for the planning of our church organization women could be used more effectively than they have been.
- 168 I feel that SDA women could fill such positions as treasurer in a conference or union office, if qualified or could serve as conference committee member. I do not feel it's a woman's position as local elders, pastors, etc. God made a distinction in male and female. I feel that we should keep it that way.
- 177 I feel there are parts of the ministry which women are able to do better than men and certainly as our society becomes more complex there are many who cannot be reached by traditional methods.
- 198 I know this is a controversial subject, but I definitely feel we have many women that are gifted with leadership ability, even in a pastoral setting. The acceptance of a woman as a pastor would not be general, looking at it realistically. But I can see a woman serving as an associate pastor in many churches, depending on their progressiveness, and being very effective. I know in the district I am in that it would be acceptable and fruitful.

- 231 In many cases there is inequality. We have a case in point here in our conference. A woman is the principal of our Academy. No doubt if she were a man she would be ordained. I certainly do feel also that a woman should be paid the same wage as a man for the same job, and should have the same benefits.
- 244 Since the Bible has nothing to say or the Spirit of prophecy in opposition of women elders and pastors, why do we make issue out of it?
- 245 I feel a woman, as an ordained minister, could serve in her capacity very well in a large church with several minister. However, I remain hesitant to say that she could serve as an effective pastor in a one-pastor smaller church. In a large church her work could be in a specific field or her specialty while being the only minister in a church would create some definite problems. I don't feel our male membership, especially, in smaller churches could even accept a woman as the minister.
- 247 My response may be somewhat colored or affected by a woman I know of who was ordained a local elder, served in a pastoral position etc. If a woman is a humble, sweet, lady-like, feminine person, not bold and authoritative, "know-all," my opinion may be more favorable to one serving as an elder or possibly in a pastoral position.
- 250 We have just nominated a woman to serve as a local elder in the Niles Mich. SDA Church! I expect to ordain her soon after our church elections.
- 291 In theory I have no objections. In some churches there are no men to do the job. Most of the women I have known who could have filled a pastors position were already writing their husbands sermons. Maybe training and practice are what is needed.
- 298 Why not have women in leading roles in the church? I am not too sure how favorable I would be however, to a female pastor who has small children and whose husband has a full time job. But then, Mrs. White fits that category and where would we be without the work she did for the church? If God has called someone to do His work- who are we to discriminate and stand in the way?

## COMMENTS

### Women's Role in the SDA Church

#### PRESENT FUNCTIONS OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH ARE SUFFICIENT

- 1 I believe a women can work effectively in pastoral work. Perhaps even being ordained, as a hospital chaplain or in extreme cases, a women may need to be a church elder.
- 2 I know that E.R.A. movement is very strong and popular, but the remnant church should not be affected by it. There are numerous officers and opportunities for the adventist women in the present church system. SeventhDay Adventist church is the world church. We have to consider all churches all over the world. Sometimes what's feasible for American church is not necessarily good for other churches abroad.
- 46 My wife and I are retired church school teachers and workers for the American Indians. My wife taught 51 years and I 36 years. Any woman has all that she can do to be the assistant to her husband in the home and do bible work, lead V.B.S., and do medical work.
- 60 I believe women can do many duties in the church and do them well-- but the offices mentioned, I feel should be held by men.
- 72 I have been a SDA for 20 years and in that time have filled many church leadership positions. I feel there are many opportunities for women to be of service other than as an elder or pastor,, both in the local church and conference wide. Doing the work at hand, as God gives it, can be just about a full time job. My conviction is that He did not set women apart to be ordained, to be ordained to an elder or pastoral position. Women have a special role, in counseling, teaching, ect., but should not aspire to ordination to fill it. However, on a local conference level, serving on committees, etc., where their special gifts could be of use, perhaps more women could be called to serve.
- 95 I like the idea of having women bible workers or pastors assistants to help in visiting and counseling but not preaching.
- 97 I think many women could qualify for any of the positions mentioned above. I would not want to hinder God's work by keeping one from any position where she would be qualified to fit, but first and foremost I would not want to see any competent man surpassed by a woman. Women can do worlds of good where a man is less qualified as in homemaking, and helping with youth and children. Men could just as well excell here but it would be regretable to see any women neglect her family for another position. I would not deny ordination to women but feel the battle is half one being male.

- 118 I believe a woman can serve in many capacities that a man cannot, especially in counseling women and care of children. I would like to see more college trained bible instructors that could assist the pastor. I think the reason women do not aspire to become bible workers is because of the attitudes of conf. president. Some would rather have interns than bible workers. I think the church needs both, especially trained ones.
- 128 God appointed men to be our leaders and priests. I am content to leave it that way. Women are called to serve God in many areas, they are valuable, but not to be ordained as ministers. If it comes to ordination of women, let them be ordained in the capacity in which they serve, such as bible instructor, elder (which I am not in favor of) but will support. There is no other area that calls for ordination. As a bible instructor and counselor (which I am at present for the Voice of Prophecy and was before coming here) and if asked to be an elder, I would have to be very sure this is what God would want before being ordained or even accepting the role of an elder.
- 136 Every member has a responsibility to ministers. The women is to be a helpmate. She is not to "Lord" over the husband. Sr. White carried out the responsibilities, giving counsel, but was never ordained as elder.
- 167 I appreciate the work of our women in the church but feel that as pastors it would be best to have a man lead out. I don't think Mrs. White was ordained.
- 186 I feel it a blessing, if the woman would remain as bible instructors, teachers, nurses and other positions more fitting for ladies. The home needs the guidance of the woman with the children and young people. Leave the pastor life, evangelism, local eldership to the men. Just encourage them and help them, not take it over.
- 189 Women have many areas in which they can work in and for the church. I do not favor their being ordained or elders in our churches.
- 170 The Lord will take care of promotions. Women have their lives so full now with things they can do.
- 204 Christ ordained 12 men though many women followed him and he was close to some. He did not ordain them. There are certain roles that are sex specific- men cannot bear children. After sin entered, women were placed in subjection to their husbands, though they were not to be mistreated by them. It seems to me "Restless Modern Eves" are not satisfied to fit the role God has designed that they should fill and are seeking a place He didn't design them to fill. I feel that certain offices in the church may well be filled by women. Teachers, S.S. Superintendent, and other roles. Yet I would want to know that it would be a definite leading in the direction of woman leadership - a direct leading of God before taking a step.

- 204 cont. Our Society has succumbed to the determined efforts to place women in more leadership roles by "Women Libers." But still the bible points out that Eve was to have a subordinate role in the home and in society. I don't know where that restriction has been removed. Certainly in the new earth state, we should look forward to that kind of equality, but we still live in this world cursed by sin.
- 222 Women in the SDA churches make excellent bible workers. These should be hired as a local pastors assistant.
- 232 I appreciate and respect the ministry of women in the church, and I feel strongly their ministry should be highly appreciated, and given more recognition than at the present time. However when it comes to women serving in the capacity of local elders or pastors of a church I feel very differently. This feeling may be influenced by my former understanding and training of the role of women in the Seventh Day Adventist Church. I recognize some women are capable and could do a better work than some men. I know this question is being giving your careful and prayerful attention, what ever is the result of this study, I will accept the decision of the General Conference.
- 257 There are many wonderful, fullfilling, christian services (occupations or whatever) that a woman can persue to serve the Lord. I would not alter a church with a women elder or pastor and would deeply question the SDA church should they entertain such ideas. What about a women as G.C. president? Once started, where will it end? Maybe we should seek biblical counsel regarding who should be ordained. God wants men to be men and women to be women. Next according to the worldly standards, we would be winking at other things that are being accepted today, (homosexuals, ect.). Our church is so wordly now and full of policies that surely the Lord drawth nigh.
- 269 If a women needs a role in the church let her be a sabbath school leader, teacher, deaconess, bible worker. Let the man play his rightful role. It is written, Titus 1:5 "...Ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee". If any be blameless, the husband of one wife....(a women can not be a husband). I Tim. 3:2- and since you have given me the priviledge to comment, I will go one step further. I do not feel a man should be an elder unless he has married," I Tim. 3:5. I feel more young married men, who have ruled their own children well, should be encouraged to take on this high honor, thus preparing them for the future responsibilities of the church.
- 273 I feel that women now are not in general fulfilling even the traditional female roles in their churches. Deaconesses for the most part only serve at communion services and at baptisms. What about visiting the sick? What about a thousand other acts of

- 273 cont.      love that a woman is so well fitted for without named as "elder or anything else." These are, in general, being neglected. Let us as women pull ourselves together and work in the church like Dorcas and Priscilla and Dr. Elizabeth Hiscox without benefit of offices. After we have done all we can as women and feel that we can go no further without being ordained then I think the time will have come to think about ordination of females for the furtherance of the Lord's work. I have no use for competition with men only for competition sake.
- 274              There are responsibilities for women and responsibilities for men. Women should stick to their own, not pastoral work. They can be bible workers and that does not take ordination.
- 280              Let the women be, Sec., Trea., and Deaconess, Music teacher. Let the men hold the other offices. This is my feelings.
- 294              I believe there is a lot of room in the church for a women to be active, than to take the role of men. Sorry this is late.

## C O M M E N T S

### Woman's Role in the SDA Church

#### BIBLE OR SPIRIT OF PROPHECY CITED AGAINST

- 8           The role of an elder, I believe, is intended for men. Jesus nor sister White, to my knowledge, gave indications that this office was intended for women. I believe in womans rights to a great extent. However God has made it evident that man was to be the head of the house and the priest of the home. He should rule in the love of Christ. The church is like the home, to be headed by man. However if man fails to do this task woman and children will do it for them.
- 16           A woman was never appointed to priesthood. Jesus did not appoint a woman as one of the twelve apostles.
- 22           I feel very strongly about the part women will play in taking the last day message to the world, however the spirit of prophecy does counsel us on this subject in a very special way. My belief, after studying what sister White has to say about the subject, is that women should not enter the pastoral work. A move to go against this is denying that God spoke through sister White.
- 29           I Tim. 2:12. It has always been my opinion that the Lord wants qualified men to lead out in His work. Women can work as it says in book Evangelism in many ways. But if the church has qualified men I prefer their leadership. We see women as prophetesses in the Bible, but not as local elders. Women labored with apostle Paul. I have assisted in many offices of the church and a number of times taken the 11 o'clock hour but not because I wanted it. Just an emergency.
- 33           Christ never appointed a women. Paul said a women should never be over a man. A pastor is over all, so is an elder.
- 39           I don't think women should be afraid to express opinions or to hold certain offices in the church. But, my understanding of God's written word is that men should lead out and not a woman. This in reference to I Tim. 2:11, 12. I am told the New Testament is written for people living in our time. Who decides how things are right or wrong? I am taught to believe the bible is our daily guide. God's word is law, not man's.
- 44           In the Testimonies to the Church, the word his is always used in connection with minister. Never her! This thing so called "women lib" is another of satans cunning ways to break up the home, church and community relations.

- 47 The religion of the Bible is male. The Father, the Son, all high priest and priests in past ages have been male. There is nothing feminine about the religion of the Bible.
- 77 I see no reason for the role of men and women in relation to church responsibilities to be changed from what it was in the New Testament. I believe the female role to be primarily nurturing.
- 123 The Bible mentions prophetess (Deborah, Anna, etc). They were chosen by God to perform a very necessary function or work for their time. But nowhere in God's word do I find that women can be ordained as a minister. Even sister White as the last prophetess to the remnant church respected the ministry of male pastors. She never insisted nor hinted to be ordained as a minister. She had a very important work assigned to her and if it pleased the Lord to reveal that women can now be ordained to the ministry, God would have revealed that information to Mrs. White. I like the idea that men be the Leaders of our Church with a woman standing side by side as his God-given godly helpmate.
- 158 When in doubt regarding any question on the Bible, go back to the original, the beginning or sources closest to the original or beginning. First, man was created first. This is not by chance. Second, after sin - 'he shall rule over thee.' This was by the decree of God. Third, the head of the family, the male was the priest of the family and led out in worship. Fourth, There was never a female priest or high priest. These were the minister of God's people. Christ never selected a female apostle. Brother we have never been able to improve on God's order of things. Let us not try now. The hour is too late. Let us press together and finish the work and go home.
- 171 Are we trying to bring women's lib into the Adventist Church? I feel that women are being removed from the home and family unit far too much. I don't feel the time has come for our women to take the responsibility of the pastor or elder. When such a time comes I'm sure God will make it known. Besides, the Bible tells us that one of the qualifications of an elder, pastor or bishop is that he must be the husband of one wife. I don't see any inference made to the woman other than being wife. Then too, with our men in their respective places as elders and pastors, the moral problems are high enough, we don't need to augment them in any form or fashion. Let us keep the women near the home front.
- 176 My question is still, why did not God give some specific instruction to this matter through His prophets when he seems to give such instruction on matters seemingly not as important? Also, do we take cultural trends as norms for our own practices? Because God did not give us instruction, do we then second guess God?
- 180 I have no personal prejudice against women serving as Elders or pastors. However, after careful study of scripture I believe that it would be unwise to proceed in this direction.
- 192 I feel strongly that the Bible shows that men are to be the religious leaders. Women have many other areas to work for the Lord and not

- 192 cont. be thwarted. Females tend to be more emotional and I like to have a man in charge of pastoring and eldering to be level headed and dependable.
- 194 Nowhere in the Bible are women given public office. The priest were all men. Just because Mary was the first to preach the risen Saviour, they didn't make her an apostle. The original plan after the fall was that man should be pre-eminant. Patriarchs and Prophets says on pp. 58 and 59 that "she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles enjoined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them..." Where else but in the church can we better demonstrate the blessing to be received from God's plan? The church is organized to help its members learn, isn't it? So, after prayer and study, I still feel that it has not been God's plan to give women these offices in the church. I feel that women already have such sacred and broad work for God that they should never covet what He has given to men. No man can ever be a Mother. I have not begun to cover here all the material on women's role in the home and church, but she is higher than the king upon his throne. What more could she ask for?
- 224 I am not adverse to women serving the church in various capabilities, but I do not believe in ordaining women. I do not believe Ellen White or the bible supports the ordination of women to office of Elder or Pastor.
- 233 Personally, opinion questionnaire on the womens role in our church should not be the criterion of whether women are elders in our churches. What does the Bible and S.O.P. direct us to do? That's where our answers should come from.
- 261 It is my honest conviction that what the church is thinking about doing is not according to the bible. (The use of women in the ministry.) There are many functions in the church that the woman can perform without going against what the bible says. We are not to do what other churches are doing in order to keep in step with the times. We are God's people with God's truth. The following scriptures I believe condemns the use of women as ministers of a local church. 1st Tim. 2:12, 1st Tim. 3:1-7, ("If a man...) (Must be husband...), A woman could not be a pastor or a local elder within the church without having or asserting authority over the man which is forbidden by God... Titus 1:4-9, Womens role in the church. Titus 2:3-5 and Phil. 4:3 say Labour with us (men); not over us (men). Please do not try to use Sr. White's position in the church as a reason for ordination of women. For she was never ordained herself, she would not except it. Her role in the church was of a completely different scope than that of pastor or elder. A role that any obedient person could fullfil, that of being a messinger for God.

283

I fell very strongly about the role of women as the bible outlines it. Even in the face of massive opposition I believe the church should carefully adhere to the distinctive roles of men and women.

299

I am not sure of E. White's views of women's roles in church offices, but the bible speaks of men in these position.

## C O M M E N T S

### Women's Role in hte SDA Church

#### ORDINATION OF WOMEN OPPOSED

- 25            There is no end to the liberal road. Didn't Jesus set the example?
- 32            I do not think that we should follow after worldiness in our church. I do not go along with some of the 1st day churches doings.
- 86            Why do we (the church) imitate the world? Cannot we recognize and accept the fact that God created male and female; each with separate and distinct roles to play- both equally important?
- 103           I think a women on the pastoral staff is very fine. I am just not ready for women ordination. In local churches a women in position of Elder (local) when a competent man is not available.
- 107           What silly foolish questions! Where are we going?
- 124           Some of our male members (and a few females) feel very strongly against this. (in our local church here) Somehow I think a man in leadership lends strength. A women might see things from a different view point, true. Perhaps even be a good leader but her interests are more divided than those of a man. She has to cook, clean, run kids to school, and a host of other trivia that, all added up, make life more pleasant for her husband. Even if not married women tend to spend more time in the kitchen, they demand more thorough cleaning, spend more time in grooming, etc than a man would. Personally, if I needed counsel I would have more confidence in a happily married man than a woman. I want women for friends not as leaders. Maybe I am too domesticated to be asking this question to. I am young enough but I perscribe to an old-fashion philosophy. I like housekeeping and I feel like a woman entering a position dominated by men or where she is sole leader of a group of people, as such, is probably dissatisfied with her feminine role. I am not against the use of women on boards or conf. committees, etc where their insights can sometimes catch things overlooked by men. Now, am I against an occasional church services by a women? No. But as my Pastor? No Sorry.
- 127           Society not prepared to make this change yet. Emotional stability not the same as males. Best suited as a helper, as her destiny pronounced at creation.

- 133 It's very difficult for me to answer page one on this questionnaire. For over 27 years my employment has been with our church in a credentialed position most of the time. There have been times that people have questioned me regarding my attitude towards being ordained. My answer to them was that I couldn't see how an ordination would make a speck of difference in how well my work was done for the Lord. People have indicated that a person's prestige with the people of the church might be enhanced by the ceremony of ordination. My questions are: Who wants prestige and for what reason? If the leaders of the church together with the majority of the people decided they wanted to ordain women as elder there would be no violent objection on my part. It does seem though that there would be some difficulties that might arise in choosing a woman for such a position. In discussing this subject with another person after receiving this information from you she made the comment that there are some women who find it difficult to abide by dress standards of the church, that it is difficult for most women to stay in the middle of the road in this area of our church's teaching.
- 134 I prefer the strength of a man in these leadership positions. The influence of women on men is great but not in place of.
- 157 A woman does not need to be ordained in order to fulfill her necessary duties in any church or evangelistic service. If a woman gives bible studies, as she should do, she will be so busy night and day she will not have time for all the church committees, conference committees, etc. However, self must be put in the background. It is too bad things are coming into the church that bring division instead of unity. I believe the ordination of women question is one of self cropping up. The husband of one wife "requirement will not fit a woman's situation." How we do twist scripture if we want to. I have yet to hear a woman speak who I think would come anywhere near to the requirements of ordination, either at campmeeting or at church. It is time that ministers and their wives do a little sacrificing themselves. Instead of ministers wives working on the outside in order to live in their expensive mansions, let them live humbly in a modest price house with modest conveniences. The Lord wants the husband to not be a babysitter in order for the wife to work to get all the expensive and unnecessary gadgets. It is time ministers preach the Word for which they were ordained, not be just social and church organizers.
- 164 I do not subscribe to women being ordained as pastors.
- 203 I would hope and pray that the SDA ministry does not fall prey to the outside trend of the worldly churches. God's remnant church should not be influenced by the "pop" ethics of the women's liberation movement, even if it is vague.

- 211 Believe it or not, but my opinions are completely my own unbiased ones. The air is thick with women's lib today so that our Adventist ladies don't need our brethren on top to actually promote it. The best excuse our ladies (including ministers' wives) need to let their young teenagers and husbands fend for themselves while they go to work at a job is that the General Conference brethren encourage it. I feel that a really Christian lady doesn't need women's lib to spur her into action. It is true that in exceptional cases especially in very small churches or companies that it is impossible to find a qualified man that can take any kind of church leadership. In cases like that it would be good to have a qualified lady be named as church leader without having to ordain her as an elder. I feel that having women as pastors would be fraught with many moral dangers. Too many pastors are already losing out in the moral line by too much intimate counseling, and with the situation reversed it would be much worse. Experience has taught us that men pastors can effectively appeal spiritually to both men and women, while on the other hand women often cannot appeal spiritually to either men or women. A women's role is simply not to be a leader in either the home or the church. Hers is a different role and in many respects a more glorious role, to be a Godly mother and trainer of Christian children as well as homemaker and helpmeet for her husband in encouraging him and inspiring him for his work. We will pray that the General Conference will have the plain backbone to gainsay this inglorious movement.
- 212 My feelings are so strong against any and all of these, that I surely would not attend a church that had women in these offices. I am a former bible worker and know that God cares and does use women but not for these offices.
- 215 I believe, that as time has been extended, and Jesus has not returned that the church is approaching another hugh iceberg; and were the messenger of God still alive, she would counsel the church and it's administration to meet it! A terrible shaking would result; but the church would survive! This matter of "women rights," equal opportunity, etc., and ordination of women; I believe that these matters are instigated by the devil and will only bring harm, not credit to the church. God bless and idrect you as you deal with the problem.
- 216 I would loathe the day when women would become elders in the Adventist church. Thanks for letting me voice an opinion.
- 264 I am frankly ambivalent on this question. But basically I am opposed to current practice in some large churches.
- 268 I don't personally have anything against women as workers, but I do know that this would hurt us in the eyes of many in other denominations. I feel unless it is concerning important theology we should relate to evangelically as much as possible. Also I am just not sure what the apostle Paul would think about it.

- 205           There must be more pressure from position seeking women than I was aware of. I hope the General Conference will not yield to their ambitious demands. How many women pastors do we already have?
- 213           I believe that our church will suffer a related problem as the home where the husband does not function as priest of the home. I believe that pendulum will swing back after the world experiences the results of women's lib.
- 193           The reason I checked 10 for questions 3 and 4 is that I believe if a woman was elected and duly appointed respectively she should be ordained. However I must go on record as being against the whole program of women elders and pastors.
- 236           I have not made an in depth study of the subject of ordination of women. My final decision can not be made until I felt clear on the bible teaching.
- 237           A search in the Spirit of Prophecy books revealed nothing regarding ordination of women in the church. Much was said however about the service of women and its extreme value. Would it be a compromise with the world to ordain women, as other churches are doing?

## C O M M E N T S

### Women's Role in the SDA Church

#### MISCELLANEOUS

- 81 I feel that many of us women do not use our leadership abilities to their potential because we have been culturally conditioned to feel that being assertive is unfeminine. For instance, my brothers present their points more effectively, but I can think as clearly as they can. If women are to be chosen as pastors, it seems to me, that older mature women would be better accepted and better able to serve their congregations.
- 159 You will need all the guidance possible from the Lord to help you in this sensitive area.
- 169 Are results to be made public? If so, please send them to me. Thanks.
- 270 What we have seen before makes a great influence in the present. But if present could be good, why not change?
- 282 I think that woman's role is important in special areas. Theologically it is the same as mans, but realistically they are not the same. Women should be supportive to man at any time.