

#9

*Unprocessed manuscript for circulation  
to committee readers only. Not for  
duplication or distribution in any form.*

DISCRIMINATION AND THE ADVENTIST WOMAN EMPLOYEE

by

Miriam Wood

## DISCRIMINATION AND THE ADVENTIST WOMAN EMPLOYEE

by

MIRIAM WOOD

Whenever a person espouses a controversial and unpopular cause, it is important that he state clearly the broad outlines of his thesis, the limitations of his viewpoint, and the avenues by which he arrived at his position. In this way, misunderstandings can be averted, and fewer antagonisms aroused--hopefully. In the interests of clear communication, then, let me say that in this paper I shall consider what appears to me to be the completely unsatisfactory position of women in the Seventh-day Adventist church organization both as to job opportunities and salary practices. For a great many years women have been seriously discriminated against in these areas, as I hope to document successfully as I proceed. My area of interest is the North American Division exclusively.

I am not now, nor will I ever be, a member of the Women's Liberation Movement. I am implacably opposed to an asexual world. "Male and female created He them"—and I am entirely contented with God's arrangement. While I may use quotations from secular authors which support my thesis, I emphatically do not buy the entire package of, to me, ridiculous proposals set forth by the highly vocal spokesmen for Women's Liberation.

In preparation for this paper, I have reread The Adventist Home in order to realign my thinking with that of Ellen G. White. In clear, unadorned prose, Mrs. White portrays the role of men and women, of husbands and wives. I accept her delineation of the balance that must ever be maintained in marriage, with the man the natural head of the home, the appointed leader, and the woman the follower. My own clear conviction is that married happiness could not be attained in any other way. I, for one, should feel highly reluctant to join my life with that

of a man whom I could--for want of a better word--"boss." Manuever, maybe, but not boss!

My concern, then, is not with the husband and wife roles. Nor is it with the enormous amount of volunteer church work that is carried on by women, onerous though some of it may be. I shall resist the temptation to point out that it is more often the retired little female church member who raises the bulk of the Ingathering goal than it is the male. If she enjoys this work, certainly the option should be hers. Skills and abilities vary; no work for our Lord can be regarded as demeaning.

The importance of the mother role as delineated by Ellen White finds complete acceptance in my mind and heart. Certainly there can be no more vital responsibility than that of training children to become full-fledged Christian members of this world and the next. A mother needs to be in her home. Having said this, however, I would be begging the question if I evaded the stark truth; namely, that modern financial pressures often force her out of the home, into a paying job. Sometimes inclination forces her out--a deep need for personal fulfillment. Please allow me to sidestep any debate as to "rightness" or "wrongness" which may be involved. Let us agree merely that many married women, the majority of them wives of denominational workers, are employed by the organized church, most of them because the sacrificial wage of the husband will not provide all of life's necessities. This group, then, is one of my concerns.

Another employed group consists of women who have not married, women of varying ages, from early twenties to retirement age. With undivided interests, and more time to spend on the job, and often more continuity of employment, these women form an incredibly important segment of the denominational working force. This group is another of whom I shall speak.

Also, there are women employees who have been widowed. I am thinking especially of those whose husbands were ministers, teachers, etc. Since the organized work

of the church has formed the central core of their lives, it is entirely natural that after the first poignancy of their personal tragedy wears off somewhat, they seek employment with the group which has always been theirs. In most cases, employment is a necessity, if these women are to live in any kind of comfort and dignity. My concern is also for this group.

Simply stated, I do not intend to pontificate on whether or not any or all of these women should work for the organized church. I do intend to state as forcibly as possible my conviction that when they are hired they should not be discriminated against because of their sex.

United States Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, writing in the August, 1970, issue of McCall's, states her case both succinctly and frankly. She says:

"Being the first black woman elected to Congress has made me some kind of phenomenon. There are nine other blacks in Congress; there are ten other women. I was the first to overcome both handicaps at once. Of the two handicaps, being black is much less of a drawback than being female."

That Shirley Chisholm, who has known every facet of discrimination, both overt and subtle, because of her color, can calmly state that her sex is an even greater handicap intensified my conviction that the time is overdue for someone to speak out against this same bias in our own church. It has existed so long and has come to be so accepted that it now seems, in the eyes of many, as a divinely ordained state of affairs.

But why? Are our Seventh-day Adventist male leaders so insecure, so mediocre, yet so grossly convinced of their superiority that they cannot accept women as equals? I hope not. I hope, and believe, that when the facts are made clear, our leaders will show themselves to be courageous and unafraid to take the necessary steps for the correcting of unfairness to women employees.



To illustrate my thesis, I have chosen the following incidents.

During the recent General Conference session in Atlantic City, I was <sup>as</sup> ~~a~~ eager to inspect the exhibits on the lower floor as any layman from a remote corner of the world. Impressed and somewhat overawed by the electrical displays, the original art work, the obvious hundreds of hours that had gone into the preparation of the visible evidence of the complexity and sophistication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I walked up and down the aisles. Each department, each institution demonstrated well that its leadership is forward-thinking, and progressive. Very good, thought I. Consecrated Christian competition is good if its purpose is to further the spread of the Gospel and to solve the problems of a world in chaos.

Finally, then, I had had a brief overview of them all--so I thought. Then it happened. At the extreme end of one of the aisles, in a dimly-lighted corner, completely removed from the excitement, happy tension, color, light, sound, and ceaseless motion of the enormous crowds, stood a bulletin board--a small, forlorn bulletin board. Obviously it had been reasonably full of printed material when the session started, but from its weary, dilapidated condition, I concluded that unsupervised children had been using it as a dart board, or a catch-all of some sort. No flashing signs here, no electricity, no LIFE. With tender, loving care someone had tried. The title of the pitiful object? Of course--"Adventist Woman Power."

My inspection tour came to an abrupt halt as feelings of both frustration and despair overwhelmed me. For that bulletin board, its location, its condition, its lack of dynamics seemed to typify the attitude of the Seventh-day Adventist Church toward women. How tragic when the magnitude of the task facing the church is taken into consideration. An enormous reservoir of ability, talent, willingness to serve, eagerness to be a vital part of the organization is being ignored. Worse

still, this reservoir is being patronized, patted on the head, figuratively speaking, and exploited.

Before going further, however, I wish to make it clear that I imply no criticism toward the woman who originated the bulletin board which disquieted me. On the contrary, I have for them the highest of praise, the highest of accolades. To my knowledge, which may not be entirely accurate, this was a "first" in General Conference Session history; it was the first time that the existence of women as a force of any sort, a power of any kind, however meager, has been acknowledged. So Seventh-day Adventist women owe a debt of gratitude to those courageous ladies who attempted to prove that (a) women are human beings created equally (b) they possess power and (c) they wish to use their skills in the work of the church. They've made a beginning, which, when one contemplates the distance left to travel, seems like the first half step up the slopes of Mt. Everest.

But back to the General Conference session. The long arm of coincidence proved its reality on the very next day when I found myself sitting by a minister in whom I have a great deal of confidence and whom I admire for his brilliance and apparently unlimited capabilities. Having thought of him as a fair-minded man, I was hardly prepared for his ridicule of what he termed "forward females"--ridicule triggered by various operational procedures which had been assigned to a group of women. (Obviously, I must blur the actual circumstances, to protect the guilty.) His feeling was that the women had gotten carried away, gotten "above themselves." Like a homing pigeon, he zeroed in with the masculine superiority which has been used to "put down" women ever since Eve. Because, you see, the extremely capable women were not married. "Just let a man look at them twice, and they'd forget all about those grandiose ideas," was his withering summation.

My instant temptation was to retort, "You've been happily married for a pretty long time, yet you're still involved in all sorts of 'grandiose ideas'. Why shouldn't it work both ways?"

I didn't say it, primarily because a meeting was in progress, and I felt that the circumstances were hardly proper for what would obviously turn into a heated debate. The "grandiose ideas" which had disgruntled him were some slightly different and rather original ways of doing things--female-originated, not male, and of course that was the problem .

To ask how many women sat on the nominating committee at the General Conference session is a question guaranteed to bring patronizing smiles to the faces of "the brethren" and painful grimaces to the faces of the overlooked and ignored majority. For that's what the female membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is--the majority. I have not been able to secure an exact membership breakdown, but my conservative guess would be that 60% of the membership is female; my liberal guess would be 70%. It takes no overwhelming degree of perspicacity to realize that if 60-70% of our church membership were to suddenly disappear, rather monumental problems would present themselves. Yet this enormous segment of tithe-paying, wheel-greasing membership had not even one representative on the most influential and important committee of the Session, the committee which determines who shall do what, go where, and hold what office for years to come.

Familiar as I am with the answers given to this accusation of unfair treatment--the answer that "definite and positive rules are set up for membership on the committee; members may be chosen only as a result of offices they hold, and women don't hold any of those offices" my reply is that a change of rules and policy is long overdue. If women cannot be allowed at least to sit in on the selection of the leaders for whom they must work tirelessly, then something is fearfully wrong



with the policies. It is not my intention to be disrespectful of our church leadership. I have confidence in them and in the Church itself. I should like to suggest, however, that a favorite dodge of any individual or group who feels threatened is a retreat behind the impenetrable facade of "policy," as though the latter had been haded down on Mt. Sinai along with the sacred Law of God. Yet these same guardians of policy find it quite possible to make changes when the changes seem to them important and necessary.

Such a plethora of incidents exists to present further documentation for my thesis that I must pick and choose, and recount each one briefly. Related to the lack of woman power on the General Conference Nominating Committee ~~during the~~ has been the fact that only two women have been members of the General Conference Committee during the quadrennium of 1966-1970. Discussing this, to me, appalling condition, since the total membership of the committee numbers approximately 160 in North America, I asked a member of the committee (male) how often the two women expressed themselves on issues being discussed. In obvious surprise at the impropriety of both my question and my inference that the statistical composition of the committee was badly distorted, he declared firmly, "Oh, they say something whenever an issue concerns them." Instantly I moved in for the attack.

"What issues of today seem to you to concern women of the church? What issues concern men exclusively? Does each man speak only on issues which concern men directly?", I probed. But it was no use. The usual "head-<sup>pat</sup>~~pat~~", the usual patronizing brush off. This time, the indulgent, masculine image was maintained by a chuckle and a knowing wink, plus the (to me) insulting remark that he could see that this is my newest interest and that the men had better "watch out." I wish he were a prophet instead of a pacifier.



The resignation of an institutional employee whose work was highly skilled, intensely important, and very demanding brought about an interesting situation for the men to solve rather recently. The worker in question was a woman; uncompainingly for years unnumbered she'd slaved away, unsung and unappreciated, crawling back to her stifling cubicle of an apartment night after night. It was thought, however, after much serious discussion, that the scope of the job demanded (what else?) a male To Do The Job Right. Accordingly, an entirely new budget for the job was hastily constructed, a budget that would be in accordance with unsculine expectations, though in truth the work load was so extraordinarily heavy that some reassignment of responsibility had to be made before those in authority had "the face" to place a call. Unfortunately, the work was still too onerous, still too heavy. No willing man could be found; the quiet, steady woman had really been a tower of productivity in an age of sloughing-off.

What to do? Again hasty, feverish consultations. The work had to be done; it was that kind of thing. Grudgingly, with deadlines coming dangerously close, the Men in Charge made "the only possible" decision. Temporarily, they said, another woman would have to be called. Of course the job specifications would return to their original outlines, and, as one member of the committee put it succinctly, "We won't have to use that budget after all. We'll save quite a bit of money, because we won't need to pay a woman what we'd pay a man!"

For once, though, the story has, in my opinion, a happy ending. The woman in question, more spirited than some of her downtrodden sisters, upon grasping the inequities of the situation, promptly resigned, leaving the men gasping at both her tenacity and her ingratitude. I haven't heard how they've solved their dilemma. I just hope they haven't found another Patient Griselda to exploit, all in the name of "sacrifice."

At this point, a mention of the unfairness of denominational salary practices seems appropriate. I should not wish to convey the impression that I am opposed to sacrifice, or to working for a sacrificial wage. Quite the contrary. I thoroughly believe in this principle; it is difficult to see how the Lord's Work can ever be finished unless His workers are willing to devote themselves whole-heartedly to the task, regardless of monetary compensation. Having said this, however, I will state that I am strenuously opposed to the major sacrifice being made by the distaff side of the ledger. I wish this opportunity to be shared by both sexes. A teacher, stenographer, executive secretary, librarian--any of these professional people is entitled to compensation for the job done, at any equal rate with anyone else, regardless of sex. To fail to give female workers monetary rewards commensurate with those received by male denominational employees is to practice rank discrimination.

At one point in my long and fascinating life as the wife of a minister, I was asked to take over a job which had formerly been carried by a man--a job in the conference office. It was a job requiring concentration, familiarity with the Bible, secretarial skills. Please bear in mind that the man holding the job had supported his family with his salary; he had made this particular work his full-time occupation. I, however, was offered the post on a part-time basis. Since I was paid by the hour, with no fringe benefits, it was expected that in case family illness should keep me at home at any time, I would catch up on the volume of work with no extra pay. Being considerably younger than I am now, and considerably poorer, and considerably more naive, I took the job, built it up until I was handling at least one-half more work than my male predecessor had done, and collected my tiny pay check at the end of each month, a pay check not even one-fourth what my predecessor's had been for much less work. But, you see, my predecessor was a man. That made all the difference. One foot note: At the

end of a year of grueling work, I was given a spectacular raise in appreciation --  
2 1/2 cents per hour!

Continuing with my epic catalogue of inequities, I should like to mention a very talented young woman worker of my acquaintance who, by virtue of being at the right (?) place at the right (?) time found herself carrying a fearful load of responsibility, none of it actually specified by her job. Since all the credit for the work was being blandly accepted by the man whose official job it was, and since none of the work was being done by him, my young friend approached the male decision-makers. Could she, since she was working almost night and day, have the job title and the more extensive financial benefits which would accrue? Her request was received with cold disbelief. "We will never," she was told firmly, "have a woman officially doing the work you are now doing." Being a spirited, emancipated soul, she soon found other employment, still in the denomination, but in an office where if she has the "game" she also has the "name." Unfortunately, those offices are few.

I submit that each time a male denominational employee practices this kind of caste system, he is degrading himself more than the helpless victim of his exploitation. The whole denomination is degraded whenever it's an "open secret" that a man's female secretary really does all his work, whenever it's a poorly-guarded secret that a man's lowly female subordinate is the creative mind behind the public work for which he takes credit. The church cries for men who are able to stand on their own feet, do their own work, give credit to those who do the work, be they male or female, use the criteria of job qualification when hiring, and view all workers as people.

During several uncomfortable years, it was my doubtful privilege to be a member of the committee planning the building and staffing of a new school. I put in hundreds of hours on this project, all of them a donation, all of them



willingly donated. This was a time of tempers and turmoil, stress and storm. My concern was that money not be wasted making the school plant a "showplace" but a practical teaching place. Finally, the long, long dream became a reality. The next step was staffing. Since the school was elementary--grades one through eight--and since I believe that in this field women principals are more qualified than men, I held out, month after month, for a female principal. I pointed out that the female mind is more equipped to deal with the multitudinous details which are so much a part of this level of schooling. I pointed out--through gritted teeth--that a woman poses a less formidable authority figure for six-to-ten-year-olds. I pointed out that the most successful elementary school principal in our church organization is a woman. My pointings were wasted on the preponderantly male committee. "We want a man," they insisted through meeting after weary meeting. During one meeting, a particularly rabid protagonist of male superiority declared flatly that if the name of the most qualified woman in the denomination were presented, he'd still vote in favor of a less qualified man. In desperation, and believing as I do in the will of the majority, I finally concluded that I had "hung the jury" long enough. I bowed to the inevitable. I will go no further with the story, except to state that subsequent events proved that merely being male did not qualify an educator to launch a new elementary school and to give it the public image it needs.

Certainly there are successful male principals of our church schools. If my comments on this subject are offensive to them, I apologize, sincerely. Nonetheless, my opinion remains the same--that this is a field tailored uniquely for a woman's qualifications. I also believe that there is considerable material in Ellen White's writings which tends to support my position.



Perhaps a personal note should be injected here. My hold-out for a woman principal was not based on personal ambition. Had the job been offered to me, I would have refused it on the grounds that I am not qualified nor trained to be an administrator. Merely being a woman and an educator is no more a qualification than being a man and an educator. The coin must always have two sides.

One of the most valuable women employees the church possessed is no longer with the organized work, her departure having been caused by the very point we are discussing. Gifted with a creative mind, administrative skills, advanced degree--name the qualification, she had it--she finally wearied of the "Can you type?" battle. For several years it was one of those "open secrets" that she literally "ran" a large department of our church work, though she always was kept in the subservient background, and always was forced to degrade herself professionally by carefully placating her less-talented, less-qualified male "superiors." Now holding a highly-paid, responsible job outside the organized work, she is as dedicated an Adventist as always, but a far happier one. In her case, money couldn't have mattered less. Never once did I hear her complain about a restricted budget. But professional and personal dignity did matter enormously.

During the past summer (1970) a former college friend of mine who has taught church school for a formidable time confided her sad plight to me. Her present position in a Middlewestern conference is the first one in which she has been paid on a basis even nearly equal with men teachers in the same school. In the school where she taught just before her present assignment, during two succeeding years the men teachers who had "the other room" openly declared that they bitterly disliked teaching and that they were only marking time until something better (in their opinion) presented itself. They made no attempt to hide their feelings from the conference educational superintendent and the church constituency.

In each case, however, they received a great deal more money than my friend, a career church school teacher. Neither man had even one college hour in methodology; neither had done practice teaching. After a few months one man resigned abruptly, having found the "something better" for which he had been waiting. Since he refused to remain until a replacement could be found, my friend held the entire school together for a number of weeks. Why shouldn't she? After all, she's a woman, and lucky to have a job at all. Incidentally, she wasn't even bitter. Church school teaching is her calling; of that she is sure. She is working for eternal rewards. I would hope, however, that the male decision-makers permit her to enjoy a modicum of professional remuneration in this life also, comparable to male teachers.

Even so, on the subject of denominational teaching, I am able to point to a ray of hope. There was a time in the not-too-distant past, when if husband and wife taught in the same school, they were paid with one check. Certainly it is unnecessary to point out to whom the check was given.

Members of my own family suffered through some crisis periods over this operational policy, when the male member of the family received \$18.00 per week for a fairly light teaching load, but was given \$25.00 per week as a result of his wife's incredibly heavy load. Progress, then, has been made.

That Seventh-day Adventist males have completely pre-empted the decision-making role is such an obvious fact of denominational life it has become almost ludicrous. Even in casual conversation, one becomes aware of, to paraphrase a slogan of the Chinese Communist Revolution, a "great leap backward." For instance, the wife of a minister nearing retirement age several years ago, spoke to me with considerable apprehension regarding his soon-to-be-decided fate. "I suppose," she murmured submissively, "that the man will think he's too old to continue." Naturally my impulse was to inquire what the woman might think. I didn't, however,

because she was so comfortably downtrodden in her concepts that I ~~WISDOM~~ wouldn't risk disturbing her at a crucial time in her life. "The men," however, did think him too old; he might well have received a bit more consideration had there been even one female member of the committee.

The incidents I have related--and they are only a sample of many I could mention--prove, I think, the following points:

1. Women are not considered in the church organization as qualified to sit on decision-making committees. Jobs which would entitle them to this privilege are nearly always withheld.

2. Women, when they are hired, are seldom thought of for administrative and leadership posts, but only for the onerous tasks which men feel themselves too valuable to do. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm says, on that point, in <sup>a</sup> secular situation; "When a bright young woman graduate starts looking for a job, why is the first question always: 'Can you type?' A history of prejudice lies behind that question. Why are women thought of as secretaries, not administrators? . . . Because they are thought of as different and inferior."

Certainly it is incompatible with the spirit and letter of Christ's teachings that this same condition should exist in our own denominational ranks.

In The Washington Post of August 14, 1970, columnist Nicholas Von Hoffman makes a similar comment. "Instead of thinking up rationalizations to ignore the problem, we men would do better to raise the level of our sexual consciousness so that we understand it's not a law of nature which has the woman always getting the coffee any more than woman should always type the letters. Men must begin to count the unfairnesses, make note of the fact, for instance, that in most offices a woman in a professional position must be on time while her male counterpart can saunter in late and take two and a half hours for lunch. Men always have important things to do; women never."



Seventh-day Adventists might substitute the words "milk" or "postum" for coffee but the picture is surprisingly accurate. Much more accurate than much of Mr. Von Hoffman's material, I might add.

3. Women employed in the organized work of the church are frequently the victims of unfair pay practices, in that they are given less salary than men employees and fewer fringe benefits. Consequently, their feeling of job security and professional self-respect is minimized.

Let us for a moment consider the past. The need for brevity precludes any but the briefest of glimpses into our denominational history. Even this glimpse, however, is more than sufficient to pinpoint women who were a great deal more than typists. At the head of the list comes Ellen G. White without whom, in my opinion, the Seventh-day Adventist church might well have never come into existence. We have been led, then, by a female prophet.

Other names from our history are those of L. Flora Plummer, whose vision, know-how, and general competency, plus her unswerving dedication, laid the foundation for the church Sabbath School Department. I believe I am correct in my assertion that the preponderance of her operational methodologies are still being used and are still effective. There is also Lora Clement, long-time editor of the Youth's Instructor, whose writing style, over-all competence in journalism, and editorial brilliance during her vigorous years are still remembered.

I have mentioned only three names. There are more—but not nearly as many as there could be and should be. One sadly wonders how many Adventist employed women are potential economists such as Sylvia Porter, potential judges such as June Green, potential corporation executives such as Mary Roebling. Will we ever



find out? The answer to this question lies in two areas. First, the willingness of male denominational employees to adopt new thought patterns, and second, the determination of concerned women that it be so.

My own approach to this problem is that I do not wish to be "anti" anything. I am only "for" -- for fair play, fair consideration. In this role, it is with considerable satisfaction that I should like to mention the names of several denominational leaders whose words and actions indicate that they, too, are aware of the inequities and wish to correct them. Elder Robert H. Pierson, president of the General Conference, stated in a sermon at the Lake Region campmeeting in July, 1970, that many women could be and would be excellent preachers. His vision goes far beyond my own, since I had not thought of women in this role. Elder Neal C. Wilson, Vice-president of the General Conference for North America, recently sponsored a resolution aimed at correcting a substantial number of the inequities which I have discussed. That he was not able to secure sufficient support for the resolution to be adopted is no discredit to him. And no surprise, I might add, to me.

Recently Kenneth H. Emmerson, treasurer of the General Conference, stated that a study of the matter of women employees in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has begun. He intimated that it has only been in recent years that the church has extended remunerative equality to women in certain sections of the church's organization; namely, at the present time, the medical institutions. It was pointed out that no doubt this change has evolved due to the influence of recent legislative and community practice rather than by initiative of the church. He said that certain actions have been taken by the church and are in the process of being implemented. These will correct some of the differences as they now appear.

On the personal level, I cannot find words extravagant enough for my own husband, who could have prevented my speaking out in this way by nothing more than a simple request to that effect. That he did not do so, that throughout our marriage he has encouraged me to develop to the fullest extent whatever capabilities I might possess, classes him, in my opinion, as a true "Man for All Seasons." His attitudes on discrimination of every kind, and his determination to further the cause of justice for all are well-known.

Obviously there are other leaders who are concerned about the topics I have discussed, but limitations of time and space make it impossible to mention them and their contributions. Nonetheless, they are deeply appreciated.

In the past, our Seventh-day Adventist Church has all too often found itself nearly the last to promulgate and adopt necessary and obviously needed reformation of one kind or another. I would hope that this would not hold true in the case of fair employment practices for women. A sampling of the religious press shows that the latter topic is very decidedly in the minds of other religious groups, with spectacular reforms being made. For instance, in Christianity Today, June 5, 1970, p. 37, I find the following:

"These days hardly any profession dares label itself 'For Men Only'. Except religion. As Roman Catholic theologian Dr. Elizabeth Farians puts it, 'it has been all right if women come to church with a cake in their hands, but if they come with an idea in their heads, they're not welcome.'"

Samplings of progress show that at the American Baptist Convention in May, women served notice that in 1971 they will demand a female president -- the fifth in the convention's history (there have been fifty-three male presidents).

Some denominations (United Presbyterian, United Methodist, United Church of Christ) now ordain women.

Women students are admitted to theological seminaries. Another first is a young Jewish woman who is studying to be a rabbi.

In Eternity magazine July, 1970, the question is asked as to whether the apostle Paul's admonitions regarding women can be harmonized with the new insistence among the latter for a greater voice in church affairs. Dr. Robert Mounce answers as follows:

"In understanding the problem this question poses, it is well to consider the difference between the basic ethical principle and the application of it which a particular culture demands. In the case of women's secondary role in the early church, I believe the principle was not so much the place of women as it was the quality of leadership. In those days women held an inferior status in society at large which deprived them of such advantages as education and leadership training."

In Eternity magazine dated September, 1970, Dr. Russell Hitt, editor in chief, comments as follows:

"As Christian women begin to see themselves in a new light, as they achieve job advancement and legal equality, they cannot help but become more aware of their limited role in the churches. In secular life a woman may be a banker, company head, physician, school principal, accountant or lawyer; but in church her leadership opportunities may be limited to teaching a Sunday school class of children or other women. She will likely be unable to serve communion or hold any major church office. Chances are she will have no official voice in deciding how to spend the missionary monies she helped to raise and to which she contributed.

"What is the solution? There may not be any clear cut answers yet, but here are a few suggestions:

"To the churches: Make a prayerful reexamination of existing ordinances in the light of intelligent scriptural interpretations.



"To Christian men: Take a closer look at personal feelings and biases. If you feel a need to be superior, why? Is your attitude Christlike?"

Specifically, then, I do not suggest any of the following:

1. that women be ordained to the ministry

2. that women be placed in preponderantly administrative roles where men must work under their direct supervision.

I do suggest -- and strongly urge --

1. that hiring of personnel be done on a basis of qualification alone, not sex, on the General Conference, Union Conference, and Local Conference levels.

2. that every department of the General Conference elect, in the duly constituted way, a female associate secretary and that this be done immediately, not at the end of this quinquennium. I should like to call attention particularly to the Missionary Volunteer and Education Departments. With the concentration of their endeavors on school campuses, I consider it highly improper for young women to discuss their sexual problems and conflicts with male departmental secretaries when they are on campus. My earlier observations regarding the unique qualifications of women in educational fields applies here also.

3. that/<sup>in</sup>the same way, women be employed on the union and local conference levels.

4. that women who are hired be paid on the basis of the job done; that their salary levels be restudied and then established in a manner so that their professional dignity be maintained and their professional competence rewarded.

5. that fringe benefits such as rent subsidies, auto mileage, car depreciation, medical policies and sustentation plan be applied as completely to women employees as to men



6. that immediate changes of policy be made so that women will be represented at the next General Conference session, not only on the nominating committee, but on all other decision-making bodies.

7. that "tokenism" in the form of placing an occasional woman on an institutional board, and then pointing to this as evidence of fair play be regarded as exactly what it is -- "tokenism."

It's Victorian, stilted language notwithstanding, a favorite poem of mine is James Russell Lowell's, "Once to Every Man and Nation." I should like respectfully to suggest the following lines for the consideration of all Seventh-day Adventist men, particularly ministers in positions of influence, positions enabling them to change the inequities I have discussed in the employment of women.

"Once to every man and nation  
Comes the moment to decide  
In the strife of truth with falsehood  
For the good or evil side;  
Some great cause, some new decision,  
Offering each the bloom or blight,  
And the choice goes by forever  
'Twixt that darkness and that light.  
Then to side with truth is noble  
When we share her wretched crust,  
Ere her cause bring fame and profit,  
And 'tis prosperous to be just;  
Then it is the brave man chooses  
While the coward stands aside,  
Till the multitude make virtue  
Of the faith they had denied."

--James Russell Lowell

Finally then, during this past summer a letter to The Washington Post so impressed me that I wish to paraphrase it. During the colorful controversy between Congresswoman Patsy Mink and the wretched Dr. Barman, a Post subscriber wrote that he fully agreed with Dr. Barman. Men have the ability, he said, to wage war ceaselessly and indiscriminately, to mistreat their fellow men cynically and uninterruptedly, to pollute the earth horrendously, as they have

proven. He suggested that women be given a chance to straighten the mess out.

With sincere appreciation for the efforts of our male workers to bring an end to the suffering of this old world, and to hasten the coming of the Lord, I'd very much like to see women unleashed in all their power for this same purpose.

SUMMARY OF THE PAPER

DISCRIMINATION AND THE ADVENTIST

WOMAN EMPLOYEE

by

Miriam Wood

---

Mrs. Wood paints a picture of the Church's view of the role of women in the church--unimportant, unrecognized and seemingly without major contribution to the decision-making processes within the church.

She points out that no women sat on the nominating committee of the General Conference, yet women comprise 60 to 70 per cent of the Church membership. Only two women have been members of the General Conference Committee during the quadrennium of 1966-1970.

She also notes that women are often underpaid in comparison to their abilities and contributions. An example is given of a woman employee who carried heavy responsibilities. After her resignation the job load was shifted greatly so that the responsibility would be lessened in order that a man might be found to fill the post. When no man could be found to fill this post, the job was returned to status quo and a woman was asked to take the job at much less pay. A personal example is given of a job she carried which was formerly handled by a man. Although her work load was heavier, her salary was only one-fourth of that of her predecessor. At the end of the year she received a two and one-half cent per hour raise. Mrs. Wood states, "A teacher, stenographer, executive secretary, librarian--any of these professional people is entitled to compensation for the job done at any rate equal with anyone else regardless of sex."

Besides equality in pay, Mrs. Wood feels that women need equality in the opportunity of self-fulfillment and recognition where contributions are

made. She gives an example of a woman who, though serving in the background, actually ran a large department of our Church. The recognition, of course, was given to someone else. This woman is now holding a highly-paid responsible job outside the organized work. She did not complain about a restricted budget, but professional and personal dignity did matter enormously.

On speaking about the position of women in decision-making roles Mrs. Wood makes the following points:

"1. Women are not considered in the Church organization as qualified to sit on decision-making committees. Jobs which would entitle them to this privilege are nearly always withheld." (p. 14)

"2. Women, when they are hired, are seldom thought of for administrative and leadership posts, but only for the onerous tasks which men feel themselves too valuable to do--when a bright young woman graduate starts looking for a job, the first question is always, Can you type?" (p. 14)

"3. Women employed in the organized work of the Church are frequently the victims of unfair pay practices, in that they are given less salary than men employees and fewer fringe benefits. Consequently, their feelings of job security and professional self-respect is minimized." (p. 15)

A quotation is taken from Eternity magazine, July 1970, as follows:

As Christian women begin to see themselves in a new light, as they achieve job advancement and legal equality, they cannot help but become more aware of their limited role in the churches. In secular life a woman may be a banker, company head, physician, school principal, accountant or lawyer; but in church her leadership opportunities may be limited to teaching a Sunday school class of children or other women. She will likely be unable to serve communion or hold any major church office. Chances are she will have no official voice in deciding how to spend the missionary monies she helped to raise and to which she contributed.



One sadly wonders how many Adventist employed women are potential economists such as Sylvia Porter, potential judges such as June Green, potential corporation executives such as Mary Roebling.

The Church must recognize that women are

1. Human beings created equally
2. They possess power
3. They wish to use their skills in the work of the church.

Mrs. Wood lists her suggestions on pages 19 and 20, which are as follows:

1. That hiring of personnel be done on a basis of qualification alone, not sex, on the General Conference, Union Conference, and Local Conference levels.

2. That every department of the General Conference elect, in the duly constituted way a female associate secretary and that this be done immediately, not at the end of this quinquennium. I should like to call attention particularly to the Missionary Volunteer and Education Departments. With the concentration of their endeavors on school campuses, I consider it highly improper for young women to discuss their sexual problems and conflicts with male departmental secretaries when they are on campus. My earlier observations regarding the unique qualifications of women in educational fields applies here also.

3. That in the same way, women be employed on the Union and Local conference levels.

4. That women who are hired be paid on the basis of the job done; that their salary levels be restudied and then established

in a manner so that their professional dignity be maintained and their professional competence rewarded.

5. That fringe benefits such as rent subsidies, auto mileage, car depreciation, medical policies and sustention plans be applied as completely to women employees as to men.

6. That immediate changes of policy be made so that women will be represented at the next General Conference session, not only on the nominating committee, but on all other decision-making bodies.

7. That "tokenism" in the form of placing an occasional woman on an institutional board, and then pointing to this as evidence of fair play be regarded as exactly what it is--"tokenism."

She specifically does not suggest the following:

1. That women be ordained to the ministry.
2. That women be placed in preponderantly administrative roles where men must work under their direct supervision.