



Introduction to Women's Ministries | Handout

Women's Ministries - Leadership Certification Program

Women's Ministries was endorsed by Ellen G. White when a new prominent convert in the church wanted to begin a ministry to women. The convert was Sarepta Myrenda Irish Henry, a well-known national evangelist for the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She worked tirelessly for the WCTU and became ill because of the heavy workload of travelling and speaking.

- In 1895, she went to the Battle Creek Sanitarium for treatment.
- In 1896, she joined the Adventist Church.
- Was completely healed at the Sanitarium as a result of prayer.
- In 1898, she wrote to Ellen White and outlined "a woman ministry."
- Resigned her position as the National Evangelist for the WCTU in order to devote herself to mobilizing the women of the Adventist Church.
 - Wanted to help them learn to work for God.
 - Felt that properly organized, trained, and directed they could do the work equal if not superior to the WCTU.
- For the next two years Mrs. Henry travelled and worked tirelessly to inspire and educate the women of the Adventist Church in service for others.
- Mrs. Henry published a weekly column in the *Adventist Review* called "Women's Gospel Work."
 - Filled with Bible studies, poetry, letters, and practical advice
 - Easy way to stay in touch with the women of the church and equip them for ministry.
- In 1900, Mrs. Henry got pneumonia while traveling and died.
 - Women's Ministry floundered and soon ceased to exist.

Timeline for Modern Women's Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

1973

- First "Role of Women in the Church" committee met at Camp Mohaven, Ohio.

1980

- At Dallas General Conference Session, President Neal C. Wilson called for the Church to find ways to organize and use the vast potential represented by women's talents.

1983

- Women's Commission founded to study the needs of women in the Church.
- Each union appointed a woman commissioner to represent their territory.



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1985

- At the General Conference Session it was voted to approve “affirmative action” for involvement of women in the work of the Church.

1990

- Annual Council, October 4, voted to open an Office of Women's Ministries.
- Rose Otis was elected director.
- The North American Division elected Elizabeth Sterndale field secretary, which was an officer position, with primary responsibility of coordinating the new Office of Women's Ministries.

1995

- The General Conference Session voted to give full departmental status to Women's Ministries.
- Rose Otis was elected director.

Gratitude and thanks to:

Betty Holbrook, Karen Flowers, and Rosa Banks for their early leadership in promoting the role and work of women in the church.

“The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and he will work through them...The Savior will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of his countenance and will give them a power that exceeds that of men. They can do in families a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed.”

Evangelism, p. 464