

I Will Go Reach My World



NURTURE



EMPOWER



OUTREACH

"We have different gifts according to the grace given us..." —ROMANS 12:6, NIV

A MINISTRY FOR EVERY WOMAN



2021.17. August 2, 2021

News from Women's Ministries Inter-European Division

Annual Family Breakfast of Women's Breakfast Team



WOMEN'S GROUP IN LINZ, AUSTRIA, FEARS FOR ANNUAL MEETING

Can we or can we not? For almost a week they prayed and trembled and were in contact with various authorities. And then, finally, they were permitted to hold their annual family breakfast in Selker. They were overjoyed! On the campground in the middle of the beautiful Mühlviertel, surrounded by a river, they were allowed to meet dear friends and church members again!

This event is annually the conclusion of the women's breakfast meetings before the summer break. This year, however, the breakfast meetings were cancelled because of the pandemic. Some of the guests were eagerly waiting for this event!

First, dear sisters took care of the flower arrangements and the food, then of course of the guests, some of our Afghan friends. There were a total of 30 people in attendance. Pastor Doru presented a blessed devotion and personally invited all the guests to the opening of the new church in September. God blessed the meeting and everyone involved was happy and grateful.

Reported by Irene Poimer from the church of Linz / Austria

Women's engagement in social media and digital meetings rises in Europe.



MAKING A LIST OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES LAST YEAR (2020)

When a year has passed, we look back in review. The media does this, but even in the church, we deal with reports and statistics. Just like all other departments, the Women's Ministries Department reports on what has been achieved in the past year. The WM directors in the conferences send a questionnaire to the leaders of the WM groups in the local churches as well as to the pastors to gather information. These statistics are then reported to the Union. 148 groups sent in reports, for which we are grateful. You might not have great expectations for what was reported in 2020 considering the circumstances, but you will be astonished at the results:

- Newsletters, Christmas letters and "impulses" were sent by mail.
- Information was shared on Facebook.
- On Instagram, spiritual inputs were offered through 523 posts.
- These spiritual inputs on Instagram were viewed by 13,980 followers.
- Visits were conducted 7,880 times following the rules of hygiene and distancing.

- Telephone calls were made for pastoral care.
- 104 prayer meetings via Zoom were held. Prayer is the most important "tool of the trade" for Christians.
- Two groups with active sewing circles reported the production of heart pillows for breast cancer patients etc.

This is just a fraction of the volunteer efforts done in 2020. If all 570 church groups would have reported their activities the numbers would be greater.

We would like to encourage you to write down now what you are doing for your neighbors a God during this year that still has restrictions due to Corona so that the statistics will be ready at the end of the year. The statistics have been forwarded to the division, where Dagmar Dorn, Women's Ministries director for Inter-European Division, will combine the reports from all the unions and send them to the General Conference. It is overwhelming to see the global statistics. We would like to thank all the women who volunteer and also those who sent in reports. Be a part of the big picture when the statistics are put together each year!

<https://women.eud.adventist.org/en/news/news/go/2021-02-19/statistics/>

Contributed by Dagmar Dorn, Women's Ministries director for Inter-European Division

Published in Mosaic newsletter, 2021 Q2, spring issue

SOUTH AMERICA DIVISION VOTES TO ALLOW WOMEN ELDERS



THOUSANDS ARE ALREADY LEADERS IN THEIR CONGREGATIONS ACROSS THE TERRITORY.

By: Felipe Lemos, South American Division, and Marcos Paseggi, Adventist Review

The South American Division (SAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted to approve a document that includes allowing women to serve as church elders across their eight-country territory in Brasilia, Brazil, on July 8, 2021. The vote, taken during the SAD Executive Committee Mid-Year sessions, affirmed the comprehensive document, which seeks to strengthen the role of the church elder.

Church leaders said that the context for ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic has made it crucial to affirm the leadership and missionary role of the church elder, including women. According to official statistics presented during the committee, 5,626 women are currently acting as group leaders across the SAD territory.

The July 8 vote took place after studies, discussions, and surveys were conducted by an ad hoc committee, which has been working on this since December 2020. During that time, the 19-member committee gathered data and surveyed 1,800 local church leaders in the region.

The Document Voted

The voted document presented two major actions, leaders reported. The first action seeks to implement initiatives "to strengthen the role of the elder and make it more relevant" to the current context. It includes initiatives to enhance the spiritual role of the elder as a spiritual leader. It also suggests ways of supporting and equipping church elders so they can better fulfill their role.

The document also suggests training and educating church elders on theological issues and better integrating the work of pastors and elders in discipleship. "The general focus will be on providing spiritual, emotional, and physical care to members," leaders explained.

The second substantial change is the recommendation to affirm women's participation in the local church leadership by recognizing what they are already doing. Part of that recognition implies allowing pastors across the region to ordain women as elders.

The SAD has taken longer than most world divisions to allow for women's leadership as most church regions of the Adventist Church have had women elders for years. In 1975, the North American Division voted to allow women to serve as church elders, and at the 1984 Annual Council, the General Conference extended that authorization to other divisions. That year, the SAD took note of the Annual Council vote about women in church leadership but never acted on it. In 1995, the SAD held consultations with their union territories about the topic.

A Momentous Decision

SAD ministerial director Lucas Alves shared that even though thousands of women are church leaders and almost 54 percent of new leaders coming in are women, they are still a minority at local church boards. "In the last decade, more women have joined our church with a call for service that has been historically present in Seventh-day Adventists," he said.

A revamped role of the local church elder implies acknowledging their administrative duties, but above all, their spiritual and missional leadership, church leaders said. SAD church leaders emphasized the momentous nature of the vote.

"This is an extremely important moment for the South American Division because we are dealing with the leadership in the local church," said SAD vice-president Bruno Raso, who chaired the study committee. "Church elders have a pastoral role as they exercise a relevant and an active role in ministry to help the church grow by working together with the local pastor."

Across the region, Adventist women church leaders shared what they think about the July 8 vote. "I think this is a big step forward for the church," said Rafaela Seidel, district coordinator of women ministries in Victoria, Espiritu Santo, Brazil. "Women have been present in preaching and strengthening the church since biblical times. They are now leaders in the labor market, and they manage their own homes and finances. We can see they are using those skills too at their local congregations."

Alves also believes this is a positive development. "The result of expanding the role of women as church leaders will result in stronger leadership and greater commitment to pastoring and mission," he said. "I think it will contribute to a deeper experience in discipleship."

The original version of this story was posted on the South American Division Portuguese-language news site.

Swiss Romande and Ticino Conference Women's Ministries News



FIRST IN-PERSON MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S MINISTRIES LEADERS OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES IN THE CHURCH OF CLARENCE-MONTREUX

On Sunday, June 6th, it was finally time for the long-awaited in-person meeting of the Women's Ministries leaders of the local churches. During the last year, we had met per zoom three times. Six of the ten leaders of active WM groups showed up in the morning. Together with them, our Conference Women's Ministries team, consisting of Bernadette Fogliani, director, Karin Sbarzella, associate director, and assistant Adriana Stasi shared a joyful welcome breakfast.

After that Bernadette presented a meditation on "Having an Open Heart." She began by analyzing the different aspects of an open and closed heart. Then she focused on our ultimate confidant, the Lord Jesus to whom we can open our hearts completely. As a practical example, she related a personal experience. In a moment of discouragement, after she asked for help in prayer, the Lord intervened in just a few minutes. How many of us have experienced moments when we were dejected and in difficulty? Then, having asked the Lord to help, a few moments later someone calls us with whom we can find comfort! Sometimes we find the right verse at the right time! Or any other answer according to our needs! How many times has it happened that after we asked God for help, we feel peace, calm, and warmth in our hearts! Like the story of Hanna, mother of Samuel, in 1.Sam.1:10-18. That is a great example of how the Lord hears the prayer of those who are afflicted, discouraged, and in need.

After the meditation and guided by Karin and Adriana, we experienced some very intense and profound moments during the workshop "How God speaks to us". Each person took a random card with a verse. One after the other we commented on our cards: What does it mean to me, what does it arouse in me, what have I experienced about it? There were some amazing experiences about how God has acted and acts in our lives. Several times the phrase, "God knows how to surprise me," was uttered. "God speaks clearly to me." One stunning example is what one sister shared. She was undecided whether to come to this meeting or not, so she prayed to the Lord that He would let her find a verse that would help her decide what she should do. And she found exactly the right verse that convinced her to come to this meeting. But that was not the end of the story! Right in our group she "by accident" picked up the same verse she had read the day before. This reinforced her conviction that it was definitely God's will for her to come. This experience had a very deep meaning. She needed to be assured that God was "really" speaking to her. She received the answer not once but twice! These "trials" touched her very much. We truly have a fantastic God who always knows how to surprise us!

During lunch, we had more time to talk and a nice atmosphere of friendship and sharing was created. The afternoon program led by the team started with a joyful song that elevated our spirits even more. After that, there was an "open heart" discussion. We talked about different aspects of Women's Ministries, issues, ways of seeing, and clarifications. There are churches where there are so many activities that it becomes difficult to organize activities for women. Perhaps they are not even necessary. Each church has its own particularity and we must ask the Lord to find the best solutions to meet the needs of women and beyond. There was no lack of exchange of ideas and suggestions. It was a very intense, enriching, and inspiring moment.

We truly lived moments that were rich in intensity, depth, and where we perceived the presence of the Lord. Yes, the Spirit of the Lord was present. Everyone left happy, enriched, especially spiritually, and with a sense of unity among these leaders. This is what we wanted to achieve. To be more united in the Lord and among us WM leaders, to work together better for the accomplishment of the mission that the Lord has entrusted to us, the Women's Ministries department!

I thank and praise the Lord who guided everything, who touched hearts, and united us! May He guide all WM leaders within this conference and at all levels.

Reported by Bernadette Fogliani, WM director for the FSRT conference

Swiss Women's Ministries Leaders Visit Churches



PRESENTATION OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH OF LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS

The first presentation of Women's Ministries in the church of La Chaux-de-Fonds was organized for Sabbath, May 29, 2021. This was on the occasion of the first sermon presented by Karin Sbarzella, Women's Ministries associate director for the Swiss Romand and Ticino Conference and Women's Ministries leader for the afore-mentioned church. Her topic was based on "Come and see..." the sermon proposed by the department for the Women's Ministries Emphasis day, which is observed on the second Sabbath in June.

After the sermon, we showed the church what Women's Ministries is about with the help of a nice PowerPoint presentation prepared by our team member Adriana Stasi. We also presented a little bit of the history and the purpose of WM and how it is organized. We also showed the leaders at different levels and what activities the department can offer and how the church can benefit from WM efforts. It was quite a challenge to pack all this into 20 - 30 minutes!

The church members listened with great interest. It was interesting to see how some brethren were nodding their heads in approval of what we were explaining.

I thank the Lord who guided us in this presentation. We want to put everything into His hands so that this ministry may develop well and enrich the church.

This presentation is the beginning of our plan to visit all 14 churches in our conference where there are no Women's Ministries activities yet. May the Lord guide us and give us the wisdom to do this.

Reported by Bernadette Fogliani, Women's Ministries director for the FSRT conference

ENDITNOW® EMPHASIS DAY



ENDITNOW® IS A WORLDWIDE CHURCH INITIATIVE

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has estimated that the cost of gender-based violence across the EU is €366 billion a year. Violence against women makes up 79 % of this cost, amounting to €289 billion. Ending violence is a world-wide concern.

enditnow Emphasis Day is on the world church's Calendar of Days and Events. General Conference Women's Ministries (GCWM) coordinates the production and distribution of the enditnow® Emphasis Day resource packets with contributions from six additional co-sponsoring departments of the General Conference: Children's Ministries, Education, Family Ministries, Health Ministries, Ministerial Association, and Youth Ministries. We encourage you to address this topic in your churches on the fourth Sabbath of August, which this year is August 28.

This year for enditnow® Emphasis Day we have chosen to focus on the issues of youth violence and pornography. These are not issues normally discussed, and we know that some will be uncomfortable with the topic. Yet it is vital that we recognize the problem. More and more we read in the newspapers of violence perpetuated by and against young people. We can no longer pretend that this problem exists only outside the doors of our church. Our young people are not safe! We must find ways to help them deal with the destructive and harmful effects resulting from these types of abuses. With God's help we will make a difference in their lives and help the healing process to begin.

North American Division Women's Ministries contributed to the enditnow Emphasis Day resource packet for 2021. The sermon titled "Bringing Peace Home" is written by Sarah McDugal, MSA-ID, Author, Trainer, Abuse Recovery Coach, Wilderness to WILD, LLC. In the packet is an eBooklet she wrote, Abuse Advocacy, and an infographic poster, 13 Minimum Steps to Church Security (written with Gary Loster). Used by permission of Wilderness to WILD.

The seminar, "The Problem with Pornography: Addiction, Abuse, and Affliction" written by Erica Jones, Assistant Director of Women's Ministries for North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Erica works with young women in the North American Division (NAD) in the areas of abuse, addictions, and pornography. Many young women have been helped by Erica's commitment and dedication to bringing these issues to the surface. Erica also wrote a brochure for NAD enditnow, "There Is No Excuse for Abuse."

The seminar, "Dangerous Kissing Cousins," written by Drs. Claudio and Pamela Consuegra, directors of North American Division Family Ministries, was published in Ministry® International Journal for Pastors, November 2019. The script of the presentation is in the packet. Used by permission.

Link to more information and resources: https://women.adventist.org/enditnow-day?fbclid=IwAR33I7UPSvdNQPymRKRlixZPyzE3HtNgfCIHTlyZruVUtjqzrbvSK9_nnQ

Morning Manna



Get your portion of manna for the week from <https://eudwomen.org/en/home/morning-manna/devotional/>

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