



# 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



2022.05. March 16, 2022

## News from Women's Ministries Inter-European Division

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### Women's Ministries Counseling Service in Spain



#### I WAS ALONE AND YOU LISTENED TO ME

The Women's Ministries Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Spain is implementing a Counseling Service for the Prevention of Gender Violence and the promotion of good treatment. This is coordinated by Sara Hernandez, a member of the current WM team.

#### The need for this service

This service was set up in response to the need to recognize that our Christian community, as part of a society where there are numerous cases of gender violence, is affected by this social problem. Therefore, it needs to give a response to women and minors that within the church go through situations of this type. On the other hand, and based on the principle of personal restoration based on love of neighbor and following the model of Christ, we assume the responsibility to get involved. We do so to respond to the society in which we are immersed. We make visible our concern and willingness to help those who need attention and guidance.

The Orientation Service for the Prevention of Gender Violence and the promotion of good treatment is intended to be a point of reference in each church. Women who are victims of violence and minors in their care can go there. We will make them feel heard, understood, and oriented. The membership can turn to us for advice about existing resources in the community to which they belong. In this way, they will be able to help family members, friends, or acquaintances.

#### Objectives

To provide a service that facilitates care for women and children who are victims of gender violence. Especially to those who belong to the church membership. But also to the community where the churches are located.

To be a point of access to the resources of the community to which each church belongs. We will establish a protocol that allows the church to function as a referral point to the entities that have professional resources that women can access.

To make socially visible our position of complete rejection of violence against women and minors in their care.

Appointment of counselors. To carry out the task of developing this service, each church is being encouraged to appoint a counselor. This person will be identified as a mentor and will receive the necessary training to perform this service safely and effectively. The training will come from the Women's Ministries team at the national level.

It should be noted that the mentor, like the position of Women's Ministries director in each church, is a position to be appointed by the church board. It is recommended that the women chosen to occupy both positions carry out their responsibilities in a mutually supportive manner.

To date, 22 churches have appointed a female counselor. They are all receiving the training required to start the Counseling Service in their local churches. This training covers different aspects of the project:

Objectives.

#### Preliminary organization.

Contact and presentation to the local entities to which referrals will be made.

Establishment of the Service.  
Dissemination and scope.  
Attention and referral.  
Materials required.  
Preparation and presentation of reports on the service provided.

### **Training**

The training provided is organized in three meetings, each one held by a professional from the social field: Sara Hernández, Technician in Equality and Social Integration and Vocational Training Teacher; Clara Nicolae, Psychologist with a Master's Degree in Gender Equality; Elizabeth Sandoval, Psychologist with a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology and attention to children and adolescents in crisis, who is currently working at ATENPRO (Telephone Service to Victims of Gender Violence).

The first training session was held on January 25. On this occasion, the counselors received instruction on the objectives of the service and how to organize and establish the service within the church and the community where it is located. They also learned how to properly manage the resources provided by Women Ministries and the Platform against Gender Violence. All of this was included in the Action Protocol that was subsequently sent to them.

On February 15, the second meeting was held where the guidelines for an effective service were given and how to attend to the different problems and circumstances that may arise. They were also provided with the necessary resources to carry out their work. The counselors were trained to be prepared to attend to people who arrive loaded with worries and problems. Difficulties that affect social, economic, and legal aspects of their personal lives. We train them to make people feel cared for and accompanied. And above all, we advise them and refer them to the most convenient service in each case. This is the great responsibility of each counselor and this is what was discussed in this second meeting.

Finally, on March 16, we will culminate with the third training meeting, learning how to create and manage a support network for women. This will be established as a necessary complementary element to promote a space for listening, mutual support, and accompaniment.

At this stage, the counselor will need to count especially on the support of women from the local church who are willing to get involved. The creation of a support network is undoubtedly a decisive point. This will be an opportunity to show how willing we are to support this ministry and to show Christ's love for women who are hurting or endangered.

We encourage congregations to support the work of the counselors as part of the evangelistic ministry that the Lord has entrusted to us. The churches that have not yet appointed their counselor are encouraged to contact the Women's Ministries department to request information.

We are sure that, placed in the Lord's hands, we will be instruments of His grace for the communities in which our churches are located. We also hope to be a living testimony to show that, following in the footsteps of our Master, we take care of what matters: to show how much our Creator loves us and cares for each one of his daughters.

Author: Sara Hernandez Venencio, member of the team responsible for the UAE Women's Ministry, from Revista Adventista: <https://revista.adventista.es/servicio-de-orientacion-del-ministerio-de-la-mujer/>

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## **Gourmet Kids at Adventist School in Bulgaria**



### **SPECIAL DINNER FOR MOTHERS**

Bilyana Valchinova, Women's Ministries Director in Bulgaria, has shared a nice project from the Adventist primary school in Plovdiv that she was involved in. The school only started last year and organized a Christmas Bazar to raise money for charity. Together the students had made a lot of small presents to sell and a part of the proceeds went for the medical treatment of a small girl with leukemia.

Another part was reserved for presents and a special meal for the mothers of the school children.

The children cooked, arranged, served, and cleaned everything. They learned to prepare exquisite vegan food and present it in style. On three days the children spent two hours per day preparing the food, and the dinner included a program and personalized gifts for the mothers. The children wrote their mother's name on a plate with special paint that was baked in the oven so that it would not be washed away. It was a special occasion with happy children and delighted mothers, and the children's restaurant could well be taken up in the list of gourmet restaurants of Plovdiv. What a brilliant idea!

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## Women's Ministries In-Person Meetings Resume in Tuebingen, Germany



### SHAKING OFF PANDEMIC LETHARGY

In 2020, just after the international women's day of prayer that the women's ministry group of the local church in Tuebingen, Germany, had organized, the country and the church went into lockdown. In-person church services were canceled for several months, and things went online with zoom meetings. The small women's group had mainly been making heart-shaped pillows for the University

Hospital and this activity was not fit to be taken online. The situation was discouraging and except for a few meetings in times when the Covid infection rate was lower, the group meetings were canceled.

Finally, at the beginning of 2022, when it looked as if it would be possible to start in-person meetings again, the group was called to a planning meeting on zoom to evaluate possibilities, participation, and willingness to restart activities. Plans were made to start meetings as well as organize the women's prayer Sabbath. It was as if a spark had ignited new creativity.

The first in-person meeting brought 9 women together on March 9, and they hope to include their activities in the new Hope Center that is being developed. On March 12, the church service was conducted by the church women, encouraging church members to trust in God and remember their experiences of God's leading and help. This was symbolized by stones with which they built a monument of remembrance like Joshua did when Israel crossed the Jordan.

Waking up from the lethargy of the pandemic is not easy, but it is worthwhile. The women are looking forward to the coming monthly meetings when they will be able to connect again. They are seeing their group and the church come to life again.

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## WM Bulgaria works together with ADRA Bulgaria to take action for the people in Ukraine



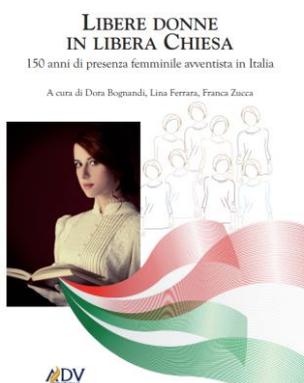
### ADRA BULGARIA AND ADRA ROMANIA SEND HUMANITARIAN AID TO UKRAINE

The Women's Ministries department of the Bulgarian Union called on the population to deliver essential goods for the people of Ukraine. A convoy of trucks was to leave Sofia on March 12 for Chernivtsi, situated about 50 kilometers from the Ukrainian border, where a crisis centre has been set up to collect aid for suffering people who cannot escape.

According to ADRA, the greatest need right now is for hygiene items - toilet paper, shampoo, sanitary pads, diapers as well as non-perishable food items. Donations poured in and the help is on its way.

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## Women's History Month



### THE FIRST ADVENTIST PIONEERS IN SICILY WERE TWO WOMEN

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

Two sisters, Marianna Infranco and her sister Domenica were the first to take the light of the world to Sicily.

Marianna Infranco was born in Montevago, in the province of Agrigento, in 1898. When she was a girl, her family had moved to Chicago, in the United States, in search of fortune. There she had come to know the Adventist message preached by Pastor Rosario Calderone, originally from Messina, who worked as an editor.

The Infranco sisters decided to return to Montevago to tell their relatives and fellow villagers of the "Advent Message". When Pastor Calderone visited Montevago sometime later, he found to his great surprise, a group of people who regularly met in Montevago under the guidance of Marianna Infranco. Calderone stayed there for a week, preaching in a classroom of the school made available by the local authorities. At the end of the week, he crowned his efforts with a baptismal ceremony in the Acque Calde, an ancient thermal spring not far from the Belice River. Six souls publicly manifested their adherence to the Adventist Church and among those baptized was the stepmother of the town's archpriest.

Pastor Calderone, returned to the United States and notified the leaders of the work in the United States and Italy about what had happened in Sicily. In the meantime, Marianna and Domenica Infranco continued their effective witness. Pastor Gian Luigi Lippolis visited the group and preached at the same school. Six more people were baptized by Pastor Diolode Werner, the new director of the Italian work. On April 30, 1921, the first church in Sicily was organized in Montevago.

Later, Marianna Infranco was asked to work as a Bible Instructor (today a pastoral assistant), which she willingly accepted. For a short time she moved to Florence, but later returned to her native Sicily, where she preached the Gospel with great zeal. The Sicilian churches have never felt uncomfortable in having women preachers nor have they ever shown discrimination against them, because, from the beginning, they have counted on valid and consecrated women.

Marianna Infranco was transferred to Bari where, until her death, she carried on her fruitful ministry as a Bible Instructor, always assisted by her dear sister Domenica, a piano teacher who, in the church of Bari, held the offices of treasurer and organist.

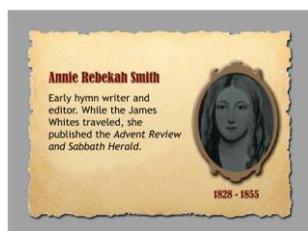
Marianna died in 1978, on a Sabbath, when she returned from church and peacefully fell asleep in the afternoon. She rests in the cemetery of Bari. Her sister moved to the Adventist senior residence "Casa Mia" in Forlì where she passed away.

The light shone in Sicily thanks to the dedication and consecration of two humble women who placed their lives at the service of Christ. Today the church in Sicily has several churches and groups in all nine provinces and continues the witness that was first transmitted by Marianna and Domenica Infranco.

Based on an extract from the book *Libere donne in libera Chiesa. 150 anni di presenza femminile avventista in Italia* (Free Women in a Free Church. 150 years of Adventist female presence in Italy), by Dora Bognandi, Lina Ferrara and Franca Zucca

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## Women's History Month (2/7)



### WOMEN IN THE EARLY TIMES OF THE SDA CHURCH

Ellen White herself became a role model and mouthpiece for the women of her time. She encouraged women to make full use of their gifts in both traditional and public roles.

"Women can be instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. It was Mary that first preached a risen Jesus. . . . If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this holy mission (one-to-one ministry) their cherished work, we should see many more converted

to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth." (Evangelism, 471)

Ellen White appreciated the role of the mother in the education of her children. She saw the family as her first mission field. But as time passed, she became more and more convinced that women had their place in public evangelism. She was also very clear about paying women fair wages for their work.

"We may do a noble work for God if we will. Woman does not know her power for God. . . . There is a higher purpose for woman, a grander destiny. She should develop and cultivate her powers, for God can employ them in the great work of saving souls from eternal ruin." (Evangelism, 465)

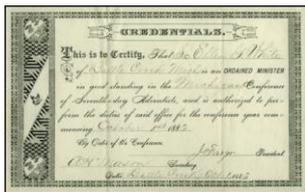
As documented by the SDA Yearbook (from 1883 onward), there were at least 53 women to whom ministerial licenses were granted between 1884 and 1975. Most worked in the US, but others also in Finland, New Zealand, China, and South Africa. 28 of these women were licensed in the 31 years between 1884 and 1915. From then on, fewer ministerial credentials were issued. In the sixty years from 1915 to 1975, there were only twenty-five. And then the church completely stopped giving ministerial licenses to women because the question of ordination came up.

At the time of Ellen White, many women worked in senior church positions. Many of the Conference treasurers were women. Most department heads of the Education Department and the Sabbath School Department were women between 1905 and 1915. Adelia Patten Van Horn (1871-1873), Fredricka House Sisley (1875-1876), and Minerva Jane Loughborough Chapman (1877-1883) were Treasurers of the General Conference. There was even a woman, Flora Plummer, who was elected secretary-general of the Iowa conference in 1897. When the president was called to California in 1900, Plummer served for a while as president of the conference. Flora Plummer was also department head of the Sabbath School Department of the GC (1913-1936). Nobody has held this position for a longer time. However, after the death of Ellen White in 1915 fewer women were appointed to leadership positions.

This is an extract from the Book *Tired of Waiting – Women in Church and Society* by Hannele Ottshofski, available on [amzn.to/3HSyP3e](https://amzn.to/3HSyP3e)

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## Women's History Month (3/7)



### THE IMPORTANCE OF CREDENTIALS

During Women's History Month we want to remind you of the impact women have made on the development of the Seventh-Day Adventist church in seven short reflections. In the 19th century, the church placed great emphasis on credentials to ensure that only licensed preachers spoke in the churches. There was a real danger of the church being led to fanaticism. To keep such tendencies in check, ministerial licenses were issued for preachers and the credentials were reviewed annually. The women who worked as pastors at that time had the same education as the men. In the roles of evangelists, district pastors, and local ministers, they were as effective as the male preachers. Ministerial licenses were important to women at the time because they showed that they had been "scrutinized by a competent committee in terms of their teaching and educational qualifications." The conferences in Kansas, Minnesota, and Kentucky-Tennessee awarded ministerial licenses to women at least in 1878-79.

Ellen White herself had a ministerial license, although she had never had human hands laid on her in ordination. She felt that her call as a messenger of the Lord did not need a man-made ordination. And yet she needed an accreditation, which was granted to her.

At the time of the General Conference meeting in 1881, there were at least seven women with ministerial credentials. This was the first occasion we know of when the question came up whether women could be ordained. Ellen White was present, but she did not comment on the subject.

The minutes record the following:

"DECIDED that women; who have the necessary qualifications, may be ordained with complete appropriateness to the Christian ministry." Then there is a comment: "The matter was discussed ... and referred to the General Conference Committee". That committee consisted of three men. The decision then disappeared and the matter was not completed. And that's why we still talk about it.

If we look at the matter, there are various ways to interpret that decision. Kevin M. Burton writes in an article for *Spectrum Magazine*<sup>[1]</sup> that he concludes that the resolution was accepted and referred to the General Conference Committee for implementation. He justifies this with the parliamentary regulations that were followed at the time, and with other similarly worded decisions that were implemented. He argues that the decision was adopted indirectly, but never officially implemented, as no ordinations of women were reported before 1930. The question was not about whether women could be ordained, but if they were, in fact, ordained. The two articles by Kevin Burton on women's ordination are enlightening and noteworthy. This is an extract from the Book *Tired of Waiting – Women in Church and Society* by Hannele Ottschofski, available on [amzn.to/3HSyP3e](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000000000)

[\[1\]tinyurl.com/dnufbbxz](https://tinyurl.com/dnufbbxz)

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