News from Women’s Ministries Inter-European Division

News from the 60th General Conference Session 2015 in San Antonio, Texs

Once every five years the world church gathers to discuss church business and make decisions. In this edition of WM news we want to concentrate on the implications this business session has on Women’s Ministries.

Women’s Ministries celebrate 20th Anniversary

Does this decoration look familiar to the participants of the first Inter-European Womens Congress last autumn?

1995 at the GC session in Utrecht, Netherlands, Women’s Ministries was established as a full department. In special women’s meetings in San Antonio this anniversary was celebrated with 3000 women attending. A huge Birthday Cake was shared.

The women’s meeting hall was beautifully decorated. Meetings were held daily. Most of the 3000 seats were occupied, when the celebration session began.
At the same time various women were honored for the work they have done for women’s ministries, eg. Ardis Dick Stenbakken, former GC WM director, who built up the leadership certification program and was editor of the WM devotional books for many years. Carolyn Sutton has succeeded Ardis as the new person in charge of the devotional book project. Nancy Wilson was also thanked for her input and for her engagement and support for enditnow.

**Arise! Shine!**

Dr. Ella Simmons addressed the women, calling them to be God’s lights: “Whether someone wants to put you aside or tramp on you, you ARE light, so let your light shine! Let your light shine! Shine! Let your light shine. Shine before men. We have to do something different. Men are wonderful, but God prepares us for a different task. We must shine before men. ‘I ordained you a prophet to the nations’, so Ellen White! God has called us to be messengers to the world. Arise and shine! – to be continued next page.

God created Marys and Marthas. Let us stop putting one before the other. Martha had her task. Mary had hers. If God gives us gifts and talents, it is a calling from God. HE does not produce for the waste bin. He prepares for the next step, and the next after that. Arise and shine! You are the light of the world! Shine! Shine!

Stand up, stand up for Jesus. Precious Lord, take me home, I am weak, thou art strong! Take my hand and take me home! Shine, shine, shine!”

---

**Elections**

Ted Wilson is reelected. He and his wife, Nancy, entered the stage to sustained applause from standing delegates and thousands of other church members in the Alamodome stadium after his reelection. “It is with very quiet respect and humility that both of us stand before you, before God,” Wilson said. “And we do accept this responsibility.”

Dr. Ella Simmons was reelected as Vice President to General Conference. As the only female person holding this position, she represents and supports women in ministry. We are very thankful that she has been maintained, while others had to leave their position. The GC decided to reduce the number of Vice Presidents from 9 to 6.

Heather-Dawn Small, WM Director and Raquel Arrais as Associate WM Director were both reelected and will remain in their positions to lead WM and support us. They will continue to be an inspiration for all women. Denise Hochstrasser was also elected to continue her work as Division WM Director for the EUD. She is willing to serve where God has called her.
The new president of the Inter-European Division is Mario Brito, formerly Ministerial secretary of the Inter-European Division based in Berne, Switzerland. He replaces Bruno Vertallier who is retiring. On the photo you see Mario Brito between Barna Magyarosi, Secretary, and Norbert Zens, Treasurer. May the Lord give them strength and joy for this important task.

---

**New Team in General Conference, Inter-European Region**

Vacancies that occured by moving Mario Brito and Barna Magyarosi will be filled at the upcoming Year-End Meeting General Assembly in November:

Ministerial with Shepherdess
Family and Education Department

Picture by Corrado Cozzi.

---

**Delegates Vote ‘No’ on Issue of Women’s Ordination**

Delegates turned down a motion that would have allowed each division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to decide for itself whether to ordain women to the gospel ministry in its territory.

**Comments:**

“Much is being said and will be said online on this issue of women's ordination. There are many who are hurt over this decision. We must pause a moment to remember that no matter which side of this issue we are on, we must remember who we are. I am a Seventh-day Adventist woman. I have been saved by grace, called by Jesus Christ to use my gifts and to be used by God. My identity is not tied up in this vote, either yes or no. My identity is in Jesus. He calls each of us to serve, He guides us as we serve, He gifts us to serve, and His Holy Spirit fills and anoints us to serve. I am at peace.”

Heather-Dawn Small

“God gifts all believers with unique spiritual gifts to carry on the mission of the church and to edify and build up the body of Christ. Ordination is not a criterion for giftedness. I long for the church to keep in focus clearly that the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts was poured out on both men and women. The gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 belong to both men and women. “So ordination is not a criterion for service, witness, or proclamation. I really believe now that we need to focus on maximizing the gifts of all members of the church—young and old, male and female—coming together in unity to focus on the mission of the church. We need to move from our discussions on ordination to focus on how to reach a lost world for Christ.”

Mark Finley, evangelist

“We will keep preaching, and we will keep uplifting Jesus.”

Elizabeth Talbot, The Jesus 101 Biblical Institute
Strategic Planning of the Church for the net five year period

The plan, which will be implemented from 2015 to 2020, is based on the results of a two-year survey of more than 41,000 current and former church members worldwide and approved by church leaders at the Annual Council last fall. It aims to provide vision and direction in carrying out the church’s mission of preparing people for the return of Jesus.

Related Links

“We are a church that believes in the priesthood of all believers and believes that multiple gifts have been given to various people,” said Michael L. Ryan, general vice president of the Adventist world church, who spearheaded the strategic plan. “Not everyone has the same gift. The items that are in the strategic plan are critical for advancing.”

Read the “Reach the World” strategic plan: https://www.adventistarchives.org/reach-the-world.pdf

Thank you for your trust

At this place I want to thank you for your trust and support. I am deeply touched by my reelection for one more mandate. Whatever I can do to support Church Life and Women’s Ministries in our territory I will do.

Life goes on, despite the disappointing outcome on Wednesday. Jesus calls us to find out about our gifts, and to use them in our ministry. This I will do, as long as I can.

I herewith want to thank you all for trusting in me. I also thank Markus, my husband, for his ongoing support and that he is always ready to go with me, where I am called to go. We see it as a common ministry, to serve to the Lord within our capacities.

Maranatha, the Lord is coming! Let us be light, let us shine, let us rejoice because God is with us, wherever we go!

Want to see and read more?

This is only a very short summary of what happened here in San Antonio. To see and read more just connect with Facebook ‘Women in Action’, where you will find many pictures and comments.

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Women-in-action/634611833226119

Join us on facebook women-in-action.

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Women-in-action/634611833226119

Further Links:
Events: Calendar Women’s Ministries EUD
http://women.euroafrica.org/calendar

Homepage Women’s Ministries:
www.women.eud.adventist.org

Denise Hochstrassser
Women's Ministries
General Conference SDA
Inter-European Division (EUD)
Schosshaldenstr. 17
CH - 3006 Bern
Mail: denise.hochstrasser@eud.adventist.org