

# Challenges in the pastoral profession for women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

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(Ps. 138:8 NAS) The LORD will accomplish what concerns me

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This verse was the motto that guided my life.

It is an honor to stand before you today. I finished my theological studies in 1982. Today, I can say that I had the privilege of having worked professionally in two church institutions. As a chaplain in a health institution and as a teacher, researcher, writer and editor in a university institution in the South American continent. For more than 25 years, I have worked at the Ellen G. White Research Center and have been the first director of the Adventist Church History Center opened in the South American territory. The Lord surprised me with what he accomplished in my life.

Let us agree that few women are invited to prepare in the theological and pastoral area as human resources in South America.

When I began my theological studies, I never did it for the purpose of exercising the pastoral profession, but rather for personal knowledge. However, the Lord had other plans. He gave me the opportunity to prepare myself professionally and become the first woman to receive a doctoral degree in the South American Division in 2014. But that meant letting the Lord go ahead paving the way. Especially when I received mixed messages. "You can give Bible studies and be a Sabbath school teacher, but you can't study theology." "We gave you a scholarship to study for a doctorate," and then "the previous commission was wrong to give you a scholarship, because women cannot study for a doctorate in theology or teach theology to future pastors." All this after having been a teacher in the theological area, a researcher, writer of articles and books for theologians. Today we still receive these mixed messages.

However, I notice some changes in my Division.

TODAY, I present you three challenges that I foresee for the future in the pastoral profession for women. I launched a survey in the past few days and here are some results.

## First Challenge

To maintain the enthusiasm that characterizes us to continue performing professionally in the ministerial area and to be collaborators with God in his mission.

With joy I notice that there are more young women in the ministry than in past years. The Spirit of God is working despite the errors of the human element. Although job satisfaction is still not entirely excellent.

## Second Challenge

Recognition. This is difficult, but not impossible. Little by little the doors are beginning to open. I see better opportunities for this to happen in the future.

Dear women pastors, I understand the need to be materially recognized for our work. But this lack of recognition makes sin exist in our Church. Because the Lord opposes the oppression of his sons and daughters.

The prejudice and culture contrary to the Bible as exist in our ecclesiastical practices that detracts from the gifts granted by the Spirit, should not prevent us from collaborating with God in his work.

I give you an idea based on my experience. To serve. Especially in spaces where others do not want. To do what others avoid because it requires meticulousness or greater dedication were aspects that helped me grow as a professional.

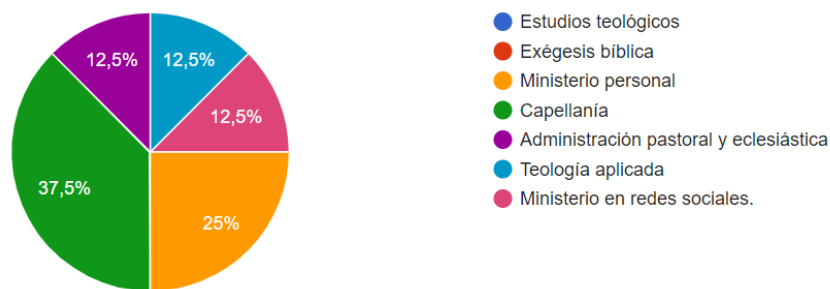
### Third Challenge

Support each other as women, not in the style of competitive leadership that I perceive in the male ministerial area and that can influence our personal performance. Our leadership should be John Baptist-style, helping our colleagues to grow in ministry.

The fight for a space is not our objective, because the Lord of the vineyard is the one who gives it.

Let us note some aspects of this mutual support. The survey respondents were in favor of holding symposiums for women who work in the ministerial area.

I show you a picture with the interest to give lectures.



You can note that there is still no intention to give lectures in the area of biblical exegesis and theological studies. It is also relevant to deal with these areas, in order to know how to respond to biases in theological interpretation that are later transferred to ecclesiastical praxis. These two lines are vital for the rest of the practices of mission and church growth.

We can maintain an Association of Women in Ministry in every part of the world, to support each other. This would allow us to train ourselves in organizing symposiums for the needs of women in the pastoral ministry, and give us a space, as our male peers have, to be accepted as speakers and thus practice in the preparation of topics in different theological and pastoral areas.

### Conclusion

Let's stay enthusiastic trusting in the Lord, serve in the Spirit, and support each other.

May God enrich your pastoral work! May he fulfill his purpose in us!