• Who is the Australian/New Zealand Adventist business and professional woman?
• How active is she in her church?
• How does she feel about her church?

It seemed essential that these questions be answered before more specific ones related to the issue under study be asked. The group sought answers to the preceding questions along with several others including:

• How does the Australian/New Zealand Adventist business and professional woman minister to her work colleagues?
• What assists or prevents her from ministering to these colleagues more effectively?

This paper seeks answers to these and other related questions. To do so it draws upon responses given by 220 Australian and New Zealand Adventist business and professional women. The paper is made up of five sections. The first, a review of current pertinent literature, puts the questions under study into an historical and social context. Section Two describes the survey process and Section Three discusses the results of the survey while Section Four analyses the results. A list of all the recommendations is to be found at the end of the Report.

The Taskforce was asked to examine how best Adventist women may minister to their secular colleagues. While the term “to minister” will occur frequently throughout the Report, it is emphasised that the orientation of this Report, and the work of the Taskforce in general, is not concerned with the issue of women and ordination. The Taskforce has deliberately chosen not enter into the current debate on the appropriateness, or otherwise, of ordaining women for ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This step has been taken so as not to detract from the intent and purpose of this Report.
SECTION ONE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section of the Report provides a historical and social background to the situation of women as they relate both to their church and to the secular world of today.

First, the mission of women in the Adventist Church is addressed: its beginnings and how women took part in the growing movement; Adventist beliefs as they relate to women and women’s work and service in the Church. Second, these ideas are discussed within the broader church setting where change is happening as it is in the secular world.

Historical and Social Setting

The ordination of women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church arose as an issue in the late 1960s and focused the attention of the church membership on the mission of women in general. As in mainstream Protestant churches, the gender ratio for membership in the Adventist Church is approximately 60 per cent women to 40 per cent men. Despite this ratio, men predominate in leadership roles at all levels of the Church. For instance, there are, in general, very few women elders at the local level of the Church structure. While there are more women on local church boards now than twenty years ago, they are mostly there as a result of holding offices with minor responsibilities or a narrow range of offices traditionally considered suitable for women. Women mostly have teaching and helping offices, often involving children. As far as the Taskforce has been able to ascertain, there is no church in Australia or New Zealand where the representation on Church Boards is proportionate to the gender ratio in the Church.

The present stereotyped and seemingly “second-class citizen” attitude to women is surprising, considering the major role women played in the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The official founding dates back a little over a century to the post-Civil War period in the United States of America. It was an era of great religious fervour, fuelled by women as much as men. In the founding of three major American religious movements (of which Seventh-day Adventism was one) in the decades after the Civil War women were very prominent. These churches gave women leadership roles at both national and local levels and women emerged as important interpreters of doctrine and experience. In Adventism, this role was taken by a number of women most of whom are now forgotten. However, of these, Ellen White still stands as a respected and heartily defended prophet, writer, teacher and preacher.

The present attitude is also surprising in the light of some important truths. First, Adventists are Protestants who believe in the priesthood of all believers. All individual Adventists are not only responsible for learning the truth, but for presenting it. In both the Old and New Testaments, women were among those who spoke for God.

Second, as already stated, during its formative years, the Adventist Church gave the ministry of women a high profile as they preached and participated in all church related activities.

Third, Adventists believe in the doctrine of spiritual gifts. This is one of the twenty-seven fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and there is ample evidence in the ministry of Ellen White that God intends both men and women to prophesy and to use other spiritual gifts given to them. If passages such as 1 Corinthians 12 are studied, it is soon seen that there is no scriptural indication to suggest that men only would receive and be able to exercise spiritual gifts.
Fourth, although feminism is seen often by Christians as a "nasty" or worrying word, this is in many instances, an issue of semantics only, given that there is the view that:

*If the Church is true to its mission, (it) is inescapably feminist. Whenever it treats women with even-handed dignity, it is cooperating with God to restore Eden, where the original relationship between the sexes was symbolised by God's act in taking Eve from Adam's side rather than from his foot or head. Whenever its call to salvation, commitment, and service disregards race, wealth and gender, it is preaching the gospel to all the world* (Yob, 1988:2).

**Perceptions of the Church**

Considering all this, it is disturbing to some church members to find that "very few women occupy high-level positions within the Adventist Church" (Taylor, 1988:158) and that the reasons for this are that the Church is, in many respects, not encouraging this to happen. There is lack of reward socially, psychologically and financially for participating. There is also a lack of role models for the less confident and inexperienced women to follow. Some church members also find it even more disturbing that, in the limited amount of literature available on women's mission and role in the Christian Church, the writers all agree that the Churches are one of the main agencies for reinforcing the low status of women in Australian society. The Church is seen as systematically denying one half of the population the rights and opportunities that are taken for granted by the other half (Roberts, 1988:19; Taylor, 1988:158).

Ideally, as Ellen White pointed out, the Church should lead the secular world, particularly when dealing with moral issues such as racism and sexism, as one of the main roles of the Church in society today is seen to be that of moral arbiter. That is, the Church should not be seen to be following the secular world only when forced to do so, for when this happens many perceive it to have fallen down in that moral role.

**The Perceptions of Women's Work in the Church**

In the earlier part of this century, particularly after the World Wars, women were gradually seen to occupy those positions that pertained to "private life" rather than "public life" in that women stayed home to be a support to their husbands and family regardless of what other abilities and gifts they held. Over time, this sphere of "private life" became devalued, as "women's work" came to be seen to be less valuable than "men's work".

Unfortunately, the Church seems to have followed this societal trend. This is reflected in the Adventist Church administration and in local church operation were women generally hold jobs of low responsibility and are rarely able to hold offices where influential decision making is a regular occurrence. This trend appears to be gradually changing as more women are becoming members of various Conference, Union and Division committees. It is yet to be seen whether this is a genuine shift in attitude or merely tokenism (Reye, 1988:23).

It is still true that in local churches, women are mainly in offices that deal with children or pseudo-housekeeping duties, such as providing flowers and catering for church lunches. These offices and duties are not unimportant in themselves, particularly those of nurturing and educating children. They do however perpetuate stereotypes of what is appropriate for women even if the women are not suitable for the positions. The office of deaconess, supposedly a parallel office to that of deacon, is seen as of less value in that it is not an ordained office (as is the office of deacon), and instead of the valuable ordained ministry of leading people to God in study and worship as it was originally intended, has become a purely practical housekeeping and nurturing role (eg. visiting the sick).
Service Divergent from Ability
The idea of “service” as ministry within church thinking seems to diverge into two different streams: one for women and one for men. For men, service involves responsibility, decision making, fulfilment, advancement and authority from a large, powerful and respected institution. For women, it seems to involve submission, compliance with a specific image (of a submissive, pure, Christian woman), little responsibility or decision making and limited opportunity for fulfilment or advancement in areas that are not men’s ideas of what women should be doing. It seems that, regardless of the preaching about women having gifts and abilities given by God, the Church appears to have seen the mission and ministry of women as having very little to do with their actual individual abilities and has failed to encourage these abilities.

The ideas discussed so far are not specific to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. All churches are struggling with the notion that women have been seen in an inferior position to men for centuries and that it is the Church, as a strong continuing force through time, that is keeping them in that position. There is a constant gradual re-interpretation of scripture through history and churches are struggling with the idea that their present interpretation may not have been correct.

The Changing Paradigm
As evangelical Christians deeply committed to the authority of scripture, it is to scripture that most protestant churches first turn when questions arise about new roles for women in the Christian community. When it comes to scripture not all people see the same material the same way. There is always the tendency and danger that one sees only what one expects and wants to see. In examining the Bible for its teaching on the role of women, it must be recognised that a paradigm shift is occurring and that the Church, along with society in general, tends to be uncomfortable at times of shifting paradigms. This is not unexpected as all institutions that are built up within one world view find it hard to adjust to another world view and, as a survival mechanism, often question the new view’s validity.

The traditional hierarchical mindset or way of interpreting scripture where the Church has seen women as FROM man and FOR men is being challenged on a number of points. This view takes and uses texts such as 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and 1 Corinthians 14:34 where women’s silence is enjoined. When these are placed alongside texts like 2 Kings 22:13-20 and Acts 2:17-18; 21:9 where women speak and prophesy for the Lord, some reappraisal often begins to occur. The egalitarian paradigm which rose alongside the hierarchical paradigm, where women were created as complementary to men, but after the fall the relationship was corrupted, also has difficulties. Both of these paradigms are also concerned with different interpretations of Genesis 1 and 2 where there are two differing versions of the creation of humans.

A new paradigm is gradually changing Christian attitudes where the presence of Jesus, through the Spirit transforms human existence for His people including the existence of man as male and female. The choice churches are faced with today seems to be whether to move forward towards God’s ultimate purpose or to remain in the past, fearful of change.

This choice is an urgent and real one for there is ample evidence to show that women are leaving the Churches in substantial numbers (Loos, 1990). To say that the reason for this is the continuing acceptance of the traditional hierarchical paradigm by the Church may be true but it is not explaining enough of the process of the changes in thinking.

Factors Influencing Change
There are at least five main factors that have had an impact on Christian women’s thinking over the past few decades. These factors include:

1. An Awareness of Changing Lifespan and Social Patterns
Women are working outside the home more, they have more opportunity for higher education, they are more aware that their lifecycle needs and lifespan are different to that of men. Today an increasing number of women are educated and ready for leadership.

2. **The Feminist Movement**
Many Christians are highly critical of the Women's Movement, seeing it as hopelessly hostile to traditional values of home and family. They are not always aware of the many diverse facets of feminism, some of which most Christians share, such as total rejection of pornography and its exploitation of women and children.

3. **Personal Experience**
Women who have attempted to exercise gifts of leadership in a church which has traditional views will have a different experience from women who have no aspirations for leadership. Similarly, a man's view will be affected by interaction with his wife, daughter, mother and female colleagues.

4. **Democracy**
In a democratic society, issues bubble up into public view for measuring against the democratic ideals. When an issue has fully emerged it is often the subject of conflict until it has been made to conform in practice to the ideal. Slavery and voting rights are two such issues in the past: women's reality is the issue at present. It is tempting to believe that only a few discontented women are using equality as an outlet; that if ignored, the whole thing will go away.

5. **Hermeneutics: the Art and Science of Bible Interpretation**
There is now a hermeneutic much superior to that of past generations who loved and studied the Bible. Both men and women evangelical scholars have now published articles and books supporting the broader role for women in the Church based on new methods of Biblical interpretation (Hestenes, 1986; Gundry, 1987).

**Hearing Women's Concerns**
Why then, with these changes happening, does it seem that women's concerns still are not truly heard in the Church? Well known Christian writer, Gundry (1987) puts forward three reasons for consideration. These are:

1. **Women's Concerns are Invisible**
Women's invisibility begins in infancy because of learned social behaviours by females, and also because of the "mystical, sexual" aspects of femaleness.

2. **Women are too Vulnerable to Communicate**
Women have learned from long experience to test the water very carefully before jumping in. The people they should expect most understanding from have taught them to expect rebuff, scorn or bewilderment, and consequently they do not disclose their ideas or feelings.

3. **Men and Women use Language Differently**
The primary reason men do not listen to women is cultural and process-driven rather than personal or mean-spirited. Because men hold positions of responsibility and high visibility, a certain type of problem solving is used. Men translate what appears to be going on into terms they understand. If, as usually happens, men cannot comprehend a woman's experience, they translate it into "It must not be what she is saying, it must be something else", and consequently appear not to hear or understand fully. Of course, sometimes men don't listen because they suspect that what they are hearing implies action which they are not willing to take.

**Consequences of a Paradigm Shift**
When any world view or paradigm shift begins to occur a change in relationships also
occurs as a result of changes in existing power structures. One only has to read about
the opposition of the early Church when Copernicus and later Galileo proved that
the earth revolved around the sun and not vice versa to realise the strong feeling
against power moving from the Church to the scientists in that era. There have been
very few times in history when women have had real power in the sense that they have
been a source of authority or influence. However, at this time in history there seems
to be such a strong, constant movement in the secular world toward women attaining
positions where they actually have power that the immediate possessors become very
concerned about having to share it or give it up. In some cases the women themselves
are so concerned about attaining something of which they have no experience
(through no fault of theirs) that they react against it to the detriment of other women
who are ready and able to use it for their community and society. These are real issues
for communication and discussion within the Church so that consequences of change
are positive.

Women as Change Agents

Once it is recognised that change is a fact of life we can spend our energies coping
with unplanned and unlooked for change, or we can plan change. Historically, Christian
women have been the “moppers up” of problems after changes have occurred and
they tend to be timid about initiating it. However, once it is recognised that Jesus was
a change agent and that responsible planning lessens the negative reactions in the
wake of change, women should be able to see themselves in this light.

As an effective change agent, the Christian woman will come to understand and be
able to use a range of experiences including:

- power
- responsibility
- conflict
- authority
- assertion

In the secular societies of Australia and New Zealand, women are already being
called upon to utilise such experiences. The expectation and experience is that they
are educated, responsible persons who are ready to take up a position which relates
directly to their individual abilities.

Women and Secularism

It has been said that if it had not been for women, Australia would be a much less
“religious” nation. From the beginning of Australian history, it has been women who
insisted on religious practice and encouraged their daughters in church activities.
According to data from the Religion in Australia Survey (1971) not only do more
women go to church regularly, but they also pray daily and have stronger beliefs than
men regarding God and the Church. Various writers have expressed concern at the
decline in religious practice and belief in Australia and New Zealand yet the data
suggest that it is women who are most concerned with resisting the impact of
secularism on society.

It would be easy to dismiss Christian women’s insistence on equality within the
Church as a mere conforming to secular feminist pressures. Considering that one of
the most consistent findings in sociology of religion is that women tend to be more
religious than men, it would be a mistake to do this.

It is against this background of women in society and the Church, that the specific
work of the Taskforce will now be outlined.
SECTION TWO

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Toward 2000 Taskforces
At the 1987 year-end Executive Committee meeting of the South Pacific Division (SPD) an action was taken to address the matter of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) mission to the secularised societies of Australia and New Zealand. A small consultative group, comprising Alf Birch, David Currie and Graeme Bradford, was appointed to pilot the initiative.

The first outcome of the group was the preparation and release of a document entitled SDA Mission to the Secularised Societies of Australia and New Zealand written by Dr Alf Birch, then Director, Church Ministries Department, SPD, and published by the South Pacific Division in June 1988. The document examines the meaning and basic characteristics of the process of secularisation. It also identifies a wide range of issues needing further study and suggests the church evaluate some specific approaches it has taken in the past and design "wineskins best suited to the culture of the nineties".

In the course of Birch’s paper being prepared for publication the project became a joint initiative of the Division and the two Union Conferences that administer Australia and New Zealand: the Trans-Australian (TAUC) and Trans-Tasman (TTUC) Union Conferences. Co-ordinating the project were Dr Alf Birch, Pr Peter Joseit and Dr Terry Butler on behalf of the TAUC and TTUC respectively.

A decision was made to assign the issues and approaches identified in Birch’s paper to a series of taskforces for further study. Nine taskforces were proposed to examine areas affecting the life of the SDA church in relation to the challenge facing the church's mission to a secularised world. These groups included:

The relevance of SDA doctrinal and lifestyle features
The relevance of the SDA church to its youth
The role and function of the local church
The role and function of Christian educators/education
The role and function of the pastoral ministry
The public image of the SDA church
SDA publications and literature
SDA mission vis-a-vis the "institutionalisation " of the church
SDA mission to ethnic communities.

A further nine taskforces were asked to examine current and potential public outreach approaches via:

Adventist media
Community services
Family life
Health education
Public evangelism
Youth ministries
Academia
Business and professional people
Women.

In November 1989 Dr Birch accepted a position in Oregon, USA and Pr David Currie, then Ministerial Secretary, SPD became project co-ordinator. In July 1990 Pr Currie was appointed Ministerial Secretary of the Trans-European Division and he too left
Australia. A third co-ordinator, Dr Gerald Clifford, was assigned to the Toward 2000 project in early 1991.

**Taskforce Examines Role of Women**

In October 1988 Dr Birch approached Dr Jennifer Knight and invited her to chair a taskforce to examine the role of Adventist business and professional women in ministering to secular colleagues. Dr Knight in turn invited three other women to make up the Taskforce. Those women chosen are all practising Seventh-day Adventists. They were chosen for their interest in women’s issues, background in research and strong skills in analytical thinking. The group met regularly from 1989 to 1991.

The Taskforce was to be the only one chaired by a woman, and the only one composed entirely of lay people - all women.

**Taskforce Membership**

The Taskforce is made up of four women from Sydney. All are professionals working full time, some juggling their work commitments with the demands of childcare as well. The Taskforce members include:

Pamela Clifford, LRSM, Adv Accreditation STEAA, BMus, Piano Teacher

Merelyn Coombs, BA, ALIA
Tutor, Department of Information Studies
University of Technology Sydney, Kuring-gai Campus

Jennifer Knight (Chair), BA(Hons), DipEd, MPH, PhD
Policy Adviser
Office of the Minister for Health and Community Services (NSW)

Linette Lock, RN, RM, DNE, MNSWCN, BA
Lecturer, School of Nursing Health Studies
University of Technology Sydney, Kuring-gai Campus

The composition of the Taskforce was vetted by the project chairman, Dr Birch and the administrative committee which was made up of Dr Birch and Pastors Currie and Bradford.

**Terms of Reference**

The very specific terms of reference given to the Taskforce were:

1. **To explore what approaches might be taken by Adventist women professionals to sponsor and conduct events to minister in some way to colleagues “outside” the Adventist community whose frames of reference are conditioned by secular humanism, or other non-Christian presuppositions, and to expose them to Christian perspectives about our world and Christian principles of life.**

2. **To propose and design a series of events, if feasible, based on the outcome of 1. above, for implementation during the decade of the nineties.**

After discussions with Dr Birch, the term “ministry” found in the first terms of reference was defined very broadly as “meeting the needs of others.”
Project Methodology
Very early on in the work of the Taskforce it was acknowledged that the small, Sydney based group could not possibly hope to speak for all professional and business women in the Australian/New Zealand church. A conscious decision was made to give as many women as possible a voice and an opportunity for input into the project. To achieve this objective it was decided to conduct a survey of Adventist business and professional women in Australia and New Zealand.

Survey Design
A survey was designed which included a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions. The survey contained 41 multiple choice and 30 open-ended questions and was made up of four components including:

- personal and professional profile
- church practices
- personal strengths and gifts
- extent and effectiveness of “ministry”
- needs of secular colleagues
- own needs to minister more effectively

Survey Development
The survey was trialled on 15 business and professional women prior to printing. As a result of this exercise several questions were deleted from the survey and others made clearer. The survey was professionally typeset and 600 copies were printed. Appendix One contains a copy of the survey.

Selection Criteria
As the Terms of Reference specifically identified “Adventist women professionals” with “colleagues ‘outside’ the Adventist community” with “secular humanism or other non-Christian presuppositions” the following criteria for selecting the survey’s sample was set by the Taskforce and ratified by Dr Birch. Women to be included in the survey had to meet the following criteria:

- worship in an Adventist setting, or have Adventist roots but no longer worship in an Adventist setting
- work for an organisation other than the Seventh-day Adventist Church or one of its related institutions
- live in Australia or New Zealand
- met the criteria for professional or businesswoman

Respondents considered to be “professional” had to meet the following criteria:

- belong to a discipline with a specific body of knowledge containing principles, laws and rules, that describes the activity and is progressively being refined through research
- undertake extensive and intensive training and education
- hold tertiary level education qualifications
- have a commitment to educating new members into that body of knowledge
- encourage continual professional growth and advancement, often through professional bodies
- possess a particular ethic reinforced by a professional code of conduct
- serve individual clients and have a fiduciary relationship with those clients
- have an orientation that serves the community in some way (Kultgen, 1988:60).

Respondents considered to be businesswomen had to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- own or manage a business
- hold a position of leadership or responsibility
• have a career with potential for advancement and growth in the work setting.

Establishment of the Survey’s Data Base

The Taskforce established quite early that there was no comprehensive data base of names and addresses of women meeting the above criteria which could be used as the survey’s sample population. Lists were available for specific professions such as teaching and nursing, but these lists were made up of women currently working for the church and unable to be used. It was necessary for the Taskforce to establish its own data base. This activity was performed concurrently with the design of the survey.

Given the commitment of the Taskforce to include as many business and professional women as possible, the process of establishing the survey’s data base proved to be quite extensive and somewhat unconventional in the traditional social science sense. Several approaches were used. They included:

• letters sent to the Church Ministries Directors of the 11 local conferences in Australia and New Zealand asking that a short article on the Taskforce be placed in conference newsletters inviting suitable women to contact the Taskforce. Four Directors acknowledged receipt of the letter and offered support. It is however difficult to know just how many conferences followed through on the proposal.

• letters sent to the Youth Directors of the 11 conferences asking for the names of women attending tertiary institutions in each area. Three Directors responded. One Director delegated the assignment to his assistant but unfortunately the assistant didn’t reply, another Director was unable to supply the information requested and the third provided the names of Adventist student leaders in the conference’s various tertiary education institutions

• a short article placed in the Record asking suitable women to contact the Taskforce

• the Executive Committee of the Sydney chapter of the Association of Adventist Women made their mailing list available to the Taskforce

• friends of Taskforce members living around Australia and in New Zealand contacted and asked to supply names and addresses of women meeting the selection criteria.

The last two approaches which utilised informal networks proved to be the most successful ways to obtain the information required. It is readily acknowledged that such a methodology may not be acceptable for research of a more academic orientation. The method was, however, appropriate for this task given restraints on time and resources.

A data base of approximately 450 Australian and New Zealand Adventist business and professional women was established. Included in the data base were university and college students, mothers taking time from their careers for full time childcare as well as full and part time business and professional women.

Survey Distribution

In mid-June 1989 a letter was sent to each woman in the sample outlining the Taskforce’s objectives and notifying them that they would receive a survey in the near future. The survey was distributed in the first week of July 1989. It was sent with a letter again outlining the purpose of the survey and a return addressed envelope.

The survey was sent to each of the 450 women on the survey’s data base. The sample surveyed is much larger than that called for by social scientists. This step was taken deliberately for the Taskforce was anxious that as many women as possible feel they
“own” the report.
A reminder letter was sent out in early October 1989 to those women who had not returned their survey.

A total of 220 surveys were returned to the Taskforce. Of these five were received after the statistical analysis had commenced. They were therefore not able to be included in the quantitative analysis. The comments made by these respondents are however included in the qualitative aspects of the discussion. These respondents are coded as S1a - S5a in the following sections.

As far as can be ascertained, this is the first time that a large sample of Adventist business and professional women have been invited to contribute their ideas and thoughts to a Division level project. It appears that nowhere else in the world have Adventist women had such an opportunity. The Taskforce is conscious that, for many women, this may be their only chance to contribute at this level of the church’s administration.

**Respondent Confidentiality**

Although under no obligation, provision was made on the questionnaire for respondents to provide their name and address should there be a need to follow up ideas expressed. In making this provision the Taskforce had to consider the question of respondent confidentiality.

The letter sent out with the questionnaire assured respondents that their name would not be published, or disclosed beyond the Taskforce. In consultation with Dr Birch, it was decided that returned surveys would remain the property of the Taskforce and at no time be made available to church administrative personnel or those in authoritative positions. Despite requests from Division personnel and other interested parties, the Taskforce has honoured, and will continue to honour, this commitment.

**Data Analysis**

The Taskforce experienced considerable problems in computating the data gathered from the surveys. Numerous attempts were made throughout 1990 to utilise the services of the University of Technology Sydney (Kuring-gai campus) but these were unsuccessful. The Taskforce approached Dr Terry Butler of the Trans Tasman Union Conference and requested the use of the Union’s computer facilities. Dr Butler processed the data using the SPSS statistical package. Dr Butler’s most helpful assistance at this stage of the project is gratefully acknowledged. Rather than employ any number of rather sophisticated statistical tests to the data, the Taskforce choose to perform simple cross-tabulations.

**Related Activities**

**Overseas Contacts:** Correspondence has been entered into with several key women in various positions in the General Conference and other North American based organisations such as Association of Adventist Women and Adventist Women’s Institute.

**Publications:** Several articles outlining the objectives and work of the Taskforce have been prepared. An article on the work of the Taskforce has been published in *Ponderings*, the newsletter of the Adventist Women’s Institute. A more detailed article was prepared upon request for the Australian produced magazine, *Adventist Professional* to be published in early 1990. Unfortunately, the editor made substantial changes to the text which seriously compromised the integrity of both the article and the work of the Taskforce. In addition the credibility of those conducting the research was questioned. As a result, the article was withdrawn. The Taskforce has also been invited to prepare an article on the work and results of the study for *Spectrum*, the North American based journal of the Association of Adventists Forums. Preparation of the article is in progress.
Presentations: The activities of the Taskforce were reported at the Association of Adventist Women's retreat in 1989 and another AAW meeting in 1991. Taskforce member, Merelyn Coombs, presented a report on the work of the Taskforce to Galston church in early 1990.

Division meetings: In March 1990 Pr Currie called a meeting of taskforce leaders. The chairpersons of as many groups as possible (nine in total) were brought together at the Division office to report on the activities and findings of their respective groups. Each leader was asked to prepare a short article on the work of their taskforce which would be incorporated into a series of articles on the taskforces to be published in the RECORD. These articles have yet to be published.

At the request of Pr Currie, a submission was made by the Taskforce to the SPD’s pre-GC Executive Committee meeting in May 1990. The submission outlined the work of the Taskforce and forwarded three initial recommendations. Unfortunately the submission was not presented at the meeting due to the large number of items on the agenda and tight time restraints.

A further submission was made to the Division session held in Adelaide in August 1990. The submission suggested that young professional and business women be represented on the Division's Executive Committee. The Taskforce was not advised if the submission was considered at the session.
SECTION THREE

RESULTS OF THE TASKFORCE SURVEY

The following discussion reports the results of the Taskforce’s survey. In reporting the data a conscientious attempt has been made to ensure the information is presented in a readable style and for this reason the more formal style of reporting social science studies has been abandoned. As you will notice point form and other informal techniques of style are used throughout this section. This decision was made to ensure that no one feels alienated by the technical aspect of the report, and that all readers are able to assimilate the statistical information readily.

The questions posed in the Introduction will be used as a basis for discussing the results of the survey. To this end, the discussion will be made up of five components, namely:

I Who is the Australian/New Zealand Adventist Business and Professional Woman?
II How Active is She in her Church?
III How Does She Feel about her Church?
IV How Does She Minister to her Secular Work Colleagues?
V What Prevents her from Ministering More Effectively?

Throughout the discussion, reference is made to survey questions along with charts and graphs reporting the results in diagrammatic form. The exact wording of each question can be found in Appendix One which contains the Taskforce’s survey. Appendix Two contains the accompanying charts and graphs. The following discussion draws upon comments made by numerous women. Italic type is used throughout to delineate those passages directly quoted from survey responses. To ensure confidentiality, each survey’s allocated number is quoted rather than the name of the respondent.

I WHO IS THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ADVENTIST BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMAN?

The following demographic, employment and training, church and self-perception profiles depict the business and professional women participating in the survey.

Demographic Profile

- Country of residence: Australia (88.8%)
- State of residence: New South Wales (37.7%)
- Age: 30-39 years (33.5%)
- Ethnicity: Caucasian (87.4%)
- Marital Status: Married (70.2%)
- Number of children: Two (29.8%)

(Further information on this profile can be found in Charts One - Eight of Appendix Two)

While the majority of respondents were in the 30-39 year “baby boomer” age group (Question 2), Chart Three demonstrates a broad spread of ages with, for example, just over 20% of respondents in the over 50 years group. This cross section of ages is in keeping with general national trends of increasing numbers of business and professional women remaining in, or returning to, the workforce. Given the large sample of over 50 year women, the small number of widows was not anticipated (see Chart Five).
Approximately two-thirds of respondents have children, of which 52% are financially dependent (Question 5: Charts Six and Eight). This is in keeping with the age profile where over 50 per cent of the sample is in the 20 - 39 year age bracket.

It is regrettable that the number of non-Caucasian respondents is low (Question 3: Chart Four). Given the lack of information on Adventist business and professional women, it is not known if the sample obtained is representative and an accurate indication of the numbers of non-Caucasian business and professional women in Australia and New Zealand, or a reflection of sampling techniques.

**Employment and Training Profile**
- Current occupation: Health related (48.4%)
- Previous occupation: Health related (36.7%)
- Current employment status: Permanent full-time (46.0%)
- Qualifications currently held: Undergraduate level (70.7%)
(Further information relating to this profile can be found in Charts Nine to Thirteen of Appendix Two.)

While the occupations of most respondents are either health or education related (Question 7: Chart Ten), the occupations of a number of women are categorised as “Other”. Included in this group are respondents from a range of occupations, often outside those traditionally stereotyped as “female”, including civil engineer, air pilot, geoscience technician, supplier to the hospitality trade, owner/manager of retail outlet, horticulturist, managing director of childcare centres, financial planning consultant, banker, architect, partner in air charter business, importer, manufacturer and company director.

Although the majority of women are employed on a permanent, full-time basis (Question 6: Chart Nine), the data show that respondents are employed in a range of work hour allocations. This pattern reflects an increasing trend to provide flexible working conditions to suit the schedules of women who are both professionals and mothers.

Given that over 70% of respondents already possess undergraduate qualifications (Question 10: Chart Thirteen), it was not surprising to find that the majority of respondents are currently not studying. One-third of respondents however are currently engaged in a study program (Question 9: Chart Twelve). These students tend to be undertaking part-time study programs at either undergraduate or postgraduate level.

**Church Profile**
- Years as an Adventist: Lifetime (53.0%)
- Pattern of church attendance: Weekly (85.6%)
- Location of church attended: Suburbs (53.3%)
(Further information relating to this profile can be found in Charts Fourteen to Sixteen of Appendix Two.)

The respondents tend to be lifelong Adventists (Question 11) who are very staunch church attenders (Question 12: Chart Fifteen). While the majority of respondents are very regular in their church attendance, 6.5% of respondents attend either “infrequently” or “never”. When asked the reasons for such a pattern respondent comments included:

*Discouraged with the church’s direction on social needs, priorities ... Strong paternalism (5070)*

*Working Saturday am. ... inhibiting but necessary (5094)*

*Grown away since having children (5144)*
The arrogant, unChristian witch-hunt which followed the Ford issue concerned me. . . . I could not attend church regularly after the Ford crisis . . . I have now lowered my expectations of the church and can now attend with my satisfaction coming from Christ not the church (S172)

As Chart Sixteen (Question 13) illustrates, respondents worship in a wide range of geographical locations including inner city, the suburbs, country town and rural areas. Respondents from rural areas raised a number of specific issues which will be discussed subsequently.

Self-perception Profile

The respondents were asked to evaluate their perceived success in two major areas - personal lifestyle and relationships (Question 25). They were asked to rank various attributes from 7 (very successful) to 1 (not successful) and in all areas the majority of respondents rated themselves at 5 or 6 demonstrating positive self concepts for most areas.

Perhaps the first impression of the results as demonstrated by the Charts Seventeen and Eighteen is how positively Adventist business and professional women view themselves. In the areas of personal lifestyle more than 90% of the respondents rated themselves at 3 or more and in relationships, more than 96% rated themselves at 3 or more. This suggests a group of women who are used to being successful. Given the population studied it may be reasonable to assume this is a group of women who are also used to taking responsibility. Yet, as will be discussed subsequently, it is somewhat surprising that of this group, only about 7% have been involved in decision making committees at levels above the local church board.

Respondents were asked to identify their abilities and qualities in four specific areas: intellectual, social, spiritual and practical (Question 26: Charts Nineteen to Twenty-two). A very broad range of attributes were identified. In the area of the intellectual women felt they possessed the following attributes:

- discussion 61 responses
- research 53 responses
- perception/intelligence 19 responses
- organisation skills 10 responses
- other skills 22 responses

Qualities of a spiritual nature nominated by respondents included:

- organisation skills 89 responses
- public speaking 66 responses
- leadership 57 responses
- friendship 25 responses
- communication skills 17 responses
- other 8 responses

The respondents considered themselves as possessing social attributes that included the gifts of:

- helps 49 responses
- prayer 43 responses
- empathy 27 responses
- wisdom 26 responses
- spiritual discernment 10 responses
- other 29 responses

Finally the more traditional “female” qualities were considered. Not surprising a