



# TEAMWORK



Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry (TEAM) is a private organization supporting the ordination of candidates to pastoral ministry regardless of race, social class or gender.

## EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENTS!

### CELESTE RYAN BLYDEN IS ELECTED AS THE FIRST FEMALE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY IN COLUMBIA UNION CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION



Celeste Ryan Blyden was elected to serve as the first woman executive secretary of Columbia Union Conference (Columbia, Maryland) on November 11, effective January 2022. She has also served as the first woman in her current role as vice president for strategic communication and public relations since 2014.

“Celeste has demonstrated a real passion for mission and effective leadership in her current position,” says Dave Weigley, Columbia Union Conference president. “She has been a pastor, shepherd, and encourager to those around her as she led her department very effectively over the years.” Blyden joined the union in 2002 as communication director and Visitor editor. In 2004, she was promoted to assistant to the president as well as Visitor editor.

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### PASTOR KIMBERLY BULGIN IS THE FIRST WOMAN ORDAINED IN MID-AMERICA

### PASTOR KIMBERLY BULGIN WAS ORDAINED TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY IN KANSAS CITY, KANSAS, ON OCTOBER 23.



Bulgin, senior pastor of the New Beginnings Adventist church based in Wichita, was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She has an undergraduate degree in music education from Andrews University and a graduate degree in music and theology from Trinity Lutheran Seminary.

Bulgin traveled for more than 15 years spreading the gospel to people throughout North America, Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe through her preaching and singing.

On September 28, 2013, she released her highly anticipated debut full-length album *God Chose Me*. Her devotional book, *Wild Worship: Setting People Free to Worship God* was released in 2016. The Love God, Love Sex Experience, a sacred ministry founded by Bulgin, strives to minister to single women.

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## FIRST FEMALE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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Blyden also created and established Adventist Women Leaders in 2017 to connect and grow women globally: [adventistwomenleaders.com/about-us/](http://adventistwomenleaders.com/about-us/). She has written three books as well as co-created a six-time award-winning television show on Hope Channel.

Blyden received her master's degree from Bowie State University in Maryland in 2005 and will

complete her Master's in pastoral ministry from Andrews University in 2022.

To read the full story in the Visitor magazine: [columbiaunionvisitor.com/2021/celeste-ryan-blyden-elected-serve-next-columbia-union-executive-secretary?fbclid=IwAR3tifcuau\\_jOYGHkHm5IIzV-VDXzeXAARxbz1qE5T1ggXK2LwXFNrrle09Y](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/2021/celeste-ryan-blyden-elected-serve-next-columbia-union-executive-secretary?fbclid=IwAR3tifcuau_jOYGHkHm5IIzV-VDXzeXAARxbz1qE5T1ggXK2LwXFNrrle09Y)

## FIRST WOMAN ORDAINED IN MID-AMERICA

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Her desire is to see hearts set free to fully love God wholeheartedly. She states on her website: "Nothing excites me more than being an unapologetic freedom maker!"

### 82% Ordination Vote Mid-America Union Conference

The Mid-America Union Conference (headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska) recognized the right of conferences to ordain women to the gospel ministry on September 12. Eighty-two percent of the delegates affirmed the following statement:

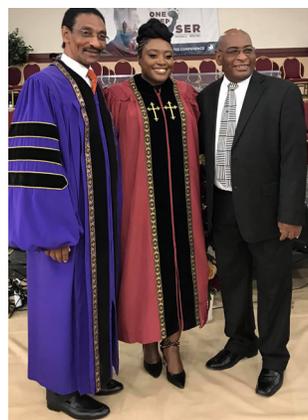
*The Mid-America Union recognizes the right and responsibility of each local conference to prepare and recommend names for ordination and will consider all recommended persons for ordination as submitted by the respective local conference Executive Committees.*

Gary Thurber, president of Mid-America Union Conference, stated that he is grateful for each female pastor: *"I hope more than anything today they know how important they are to our mission and their pastoral leadership is vital to our territory."*

This is the third union conference in North America to vote ordination regardless of gender.

## CONGRATULATIONS

May God richly bless your ministry!



*"Nothing excites me more than being an unapologetic freedom maker!"*



## AAW CHAMPION OF JUSTICE & WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Photo courtesy of AAW



The Association of Adventist Women (AAW) held its 49th annual awards banquet in Loma Linda, California, on October 30. Charles Sandefur and Henry J. Fordham III were awarded the Champion of Justice awards. “Champion of Justice leaders have stood for truth, following their conscience and the will of their constituents to treat men and women clergy equally,” stated AAW president Nerida Taylor Bates.

Charles Sandefur (DMin), the speaker for the event and Champion of Justice award recipient, celebrated a lifetime of advocacy for equal treatment of women. He is a very strong supporter of TEAM, which nominated him for the award. He cofounded the enditnow campaign to stop violence against women, served as president of ADRA, and is currently the chairperson of the Versacare board of directors.

The Champion of Justice Award, given posthumously to Fordham, president of the Allegheny East Conference who recently died in a house fire, was accepted by his son, Donovan Fordham. Fordham’s passionate advocacy for women resulted in two women being ordained in 2020 in Allegheny East Conference.

Three women were voted as Women of the Year: Helen Hopp Marshak and Phyllis Lee Ware for Leadership and Administration, and Dianne Sika-Paotonu for Scholarship.

**Helen Hopp Marshak** (PhD) spoke on her experiences as dean of Loma Linda University’s School of Public Health. She is also vice president for public health education at Loma Linda University Health.

**Phyllis Lee Ware** (MBA, CPA) is the first and only woman to have served as a regional conference president. She served in Central States Conference in the North American Division (NAD) while a new president was selected. She also served as chief financial officer for the Office of Regional Conference Ministry and Regional Conference Retirement Plan, and as treasurer

for Central States Conference. She gave 35 years to serving the church.

**Dianne Sika-Paotonu** (MD), a Fulbright scholar and immunologist researcher in rheumatic heart disease in the South Pacific, is the associate dean of the University of Otago in Wellington, New Zealand, and recipient of the 2020 New Zealand Association of Scientists Cranwell Medal for excellence in communicating science to the general public in any area of science or technology.

For more information go to: [associationofadventist-women.com/watch-awards-show](https://associationofadventist-women.com/watch-awards-show)

### THANK YOU FROM TEAM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

*God bless you and TEAM abundantly for considering me and awarding me a scholarship; you have enabled me to continue with my studies. You are a blessing to me. May God open more doors for donors so that you continue being a blessing to many in Jesus’ name.*

*Elaine – Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA*

*My gratitude is so big that I have no words to express how I feel. Last semester I studied hard and did well; I also took my 1st-level English course, which I passed. I’m advancing in my learning and sharing the message in different ways, and my greatest desire is to take hope to many people and to preach this gospel throughout the world. I thank you, all the donors who make this possible. As I apply for my 2022 scholarship, I feel so motivated knowing that TEAM will extend support to me, and this assurance makes me feel so grateful, and in return, I will be hugging you in my prayers.*

*Silvia – Colombia Adventist University Corporation, Colombia*

*I want to extend my gratitude to you, I even lack words to explain many thanks and blessings to you; may God enlarge your territory. . . . I have picked up my laptop and once again, thank you.*  
*Gravine – University of East Africa Baraton, Kenya*

## CURRENT TEAM RECIPIENT

### MARIELYIS FONT GONZALES-ADVENTIST

#### THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF CUBA (SETAC)



When I was 16 years old, a friend invited me to an evangelistic series, where I became acquainted with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I love music, and this was the marvelous instrument that brought me to the feet of Jesus. A Bible worker named Luisa María gave my mother and me Bible

studies, and we were baptized February 14, 2004. The church was my school—it molded my life, transformed my character, and helped me discover gifts that I never thought I had. Before being a Christian, my dream was to dance, sing, and act. But God had other plans for me beyond my expectations, which gave a true purpose to my existence.

At that time, I was studying for an IT career. I was repeatedly told that I had to attend Saturday classes, but God helped me not to succumb and to stay faithful. I remember my pastor's words, "Don't attend on Sabbath, but try to be the best student and never miss a class during the rest of the week." His words echoed in my life and helped me understand the true meaning of keeping the Sabbath and being a Christian. I finished my studies after several years and was able to graduate with God's help.

In 2005, I started working at the general teaching hospital in my hometown of Holguín, Cuba. I was in charge of the Department for Clinical Trials of vaccines and treatments for cancer. This was one of the best experiences of my life, because I was able to understand the pain of those suffering from cancer and had the ability to help them during their most difficult moments.

While I worked at the hospital, my spiritual life grew in my church of Alcides Pino. There I took piano lessons, sang in the choir, directed the department of art and culture, and worked as a director and teacher of children's ministry. My passion was missionary work, and we visited hospitals to sing and pray with the sick. We also took the children and taught them from early childhood to do God's work sharing hope, joy, and salvation.

Later, I was trained in a program for youth evangelists. As part of the training, I had to give an evangelistic se-

ries. It was my first experience, and in spite of my fear, the Lord was with me, and it was a great blessing.

In 2010, Pastor Leandro Carralero asked me if I felt called to study theology, since he saw qualities in me to become a Bible worker. I said, "Pastor, I don't know, but I will pray and ask the Lord about it." I told myself that to be a Bible worker I had to give Bible studies, so I started Bible studies with two neighbors. This experience gave me much joy.

I continued praying and filled out an application to enroll in the Adventist Theological Seminary of Cuba (SETAC). By God's grace I was accepted. However, this meant that I had to resign from my job, travel to the capital (Havana is at least 10 hours travel by bus from Holguín), and pay for my studies without any income. Some of my family and friends told me I was crazy, that I shouldn't leave my job to go study. But I felt fully convicted that God was calling me.

Arriving at SETAC was an enriching experience. It was an unforgettable place, where I prepared to serve God. The Lord also gave me the privilege there to meet the man who is today my husband. I have no words to describe how good God is, and all that He does for us without our deserving it.

During my stay at SETAC, in the midst of assignments and requirements, I proposed to set apart time to share the Word of God and give Bible studies. I cannot describe the great happiness I felt to see some of them give their lives to Christ Jesus through baptism.

In 2015, by God's grace. I graduated with my degree in theology. Along with my husband, I traveled to Nicaragua to serve the Lord at the Central Mission of Nicaragua. At present, I serve as chaplain at Shick 1 Adventist School.

Also, I'm the coordinator for women's ministries, children's ministries, Dorcas, and deaconesses in the districts where we work. There I organize different activities for the benefit of women, youth, adolescents, and children.

I love the pastoral ministry, visitation, missionary work, teaching, counseling, and blessing those around me. That is why I long to prepare myself through a master's program in pastoral theology. Later, God willing, I hope to get a doctorate in pastoral ministry with emphasis in chaplaincy. I pray to God to allow me to fulfill the dreams He has for my life.

**ELAINE CRUZ – ANDREWS**  
**UNIVERSITY, BERRIEN SPRINGS,**  
**MICHIGAN, USA**



*Elaine Cruz*

It is with so much joy and much gratitude that I would like to announce that I've been hired by the Northern California Conference to be the assistant pastor in Santa Rosa Church, California. This victory belongs to God because He already planned all these even before He called me. Also, this victory belongs to TEAM, especially Bev and Selma who spent their time to know me and support me. Without your financial support, it would have been so much harder. God sent you all to support me.

[timeforequality.net](http://timeforequality.net)

**TEAM IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THAT**  
**WE ARE NOW A REGISTERED CHARITABLE**  
**ORGANIZATION WITH AMAZON SMILE!**

This means that 0.5% of your Prime qualified purchases from Amazon will go directly to TEAM for scholarships when selected as your designated charity through Amazon. There is no cost to you.

Signing up for AmazonSmile on a web browser:

- 1) Visit: [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)
- 2) Sign in with the same account you use for Amazon.com.
- 3) Select or change your charity to:  
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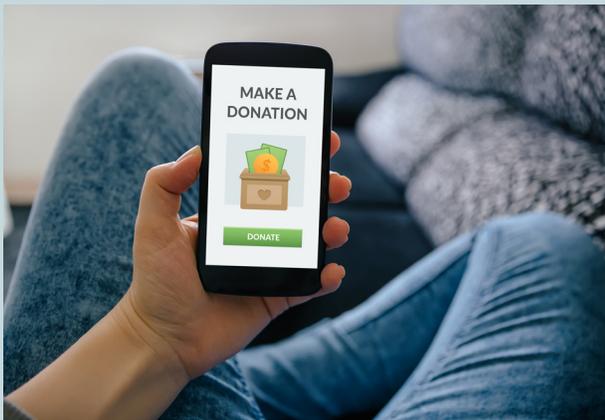
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**You shop. Amazon gives.**

## **YOUR DONATION IMPACTS WOMEN'S LIVES AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Will You Consider Giving A Donation to TEAM?**

Your financial support allows us to continue to award scholarships to women in ministry around the world who are following their calling



#### **GIVE ONLINE**

Go to: [timeforequality.net/support-us](http://timeforequality.net/support-us)

#### **MAIL A CHECK**

TEAM, PO Box 7816

Langley Park, MD 20787-7816

*Thank you for giving generously to support TEAM*



EQUALITY

TIMEFOREQUALITY.NET



SPIRITUAL GIFTS OF WOMEN



SUPPORT

## FIRSTS IN 2021

**Chaplain Wanda Acevedo** – first Seventh-day Adventist woman to be promoted to lieutenant colonel in United States Army Reserve • **Pastor Kimberly Bulgin** – first woman ordained in Mid-America Union Conference and is senior pastor, New Beginnings church in Wichita, Kansas • **Pastor Elina Camarena** – first ordained Hispanic woman globally who pastors at Paradise Valley Hispanic church in Spring Valley, California • **Pastor Melissa Cooke** – first woman elected as executive secretary of Maritime Conference (headquarters in Moncton, New Brunswick), formerly served as associate pastor of a church in Abbotsford, British Columbia • **Pastor Darriel Hoy** – first woman to serve as communication director of the Office of Regional Conference Ministries and the Regional Conference Retirement Plan (ORCM/RCRP), in Huntsville, Alabama • **Dr. Edyta Jankiewicz** – first woman appointed associate ministerial secretary for women in ministry in the South Pacific Division, Australia • **Pastor Lola Moore-Johnston** – first woman to serve as lead pastor in the Potomac Conference, serving at Restoration Praise Center in Bowie, Maryland • **Dr. Paula Olivier** – first woman to serve as youth director of the Northeastern Conference (headquarters in Jamaica, New York) • **Ana Patterson (MBA)** – first woman and first Latino to serve as president of Southwestern University in Keene, Texas • **Pastor Lyndelle Peterson** – first woman appointed as Ministerial Association associate secretary (part time) in the Australian Union Conference, Australia • **Sandra E. Roberts** – first woman elected to serve as executive secretary in the administration of the Pacific Union Conference, as well as first woman in this position in the North American Division (she formerly served as the first female president of the Southeastern California Conference) • **Celeste Ryan Blyden** – first woman elected to serve as executive secretary in the administration of the Columbia Union Conference (headquarters in Columbia, Maryland) • **Karen Senecal (MBA, CPA)** – first woman vice-president for finance for the Potomac Conference (headquarters in Staunton, Virginia), the largest conference in the Columbia Union Conference.

*TEAM is aware that there are many more firsts that are not listed, and we congratulate all these women as well!*

## SCHOLARSHIPS

January–December 2021

**\$78,923.14**

Women receiving scholarships in 2021 – **72**

Total laptops purchased through December 2021 – **53**

Laptop cost through December 2021

**\$16,484.00**

**Total** - Scholarships & assistance through Dec. 2021

**\$96,752.14**

To view scholarship recipients go to:

**[timeforequality.net/post/2021-scholarships-and-laptops](https://timeforequality.net/post/2021-scholarships-and-laptops)**

We could not have done this without your support, which is vital as we continue to award scholarships to educate women globally. **Thank You!**

## Year-End Giving to TEAM

Your financial support allows us to continue to award scholarships and provide laptops to women in ministry who are following their calling from around the world.

### ONLINE GIVING

Go to: **[timeforequality.net/support-us](https://timeforequality.net/support-us)**

### CHECK

Mail to: TEAM, PO Box 7816, Langley Park, MD 20787-7816

### STOCK DONATIONS

TEAM accepts stock donations. If you wish to donate stocks before year-end, contact [Rosburgkay@gmail.com](mailto:Rosburgkay@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU** for giving generously to support TEAM

## TO NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGES OR TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY

Please send a request by e-mail or regular mail to: [TEAMemail59@gmail.com](mailto:TEAMemail59@gmail.com) or TEAM, PO Box 7816, Langley Park, Maryland 20787-7816 U.S.A.

## Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry

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