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THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN PASTORS IN MAINLINE PROTESTANT
DENOMINATIONS

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
Rita Gale Burnett

May 2017

THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN PASTORS IN MAINLINE PROTESTANT
DENOMINATIONS

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This work remains dedicated first and foremost to God my Father, Jesus Christ my Savior, and the Holy Spirit my Intercessor. Divine intervention, support, direction, and guidance have been the lifeline behind the completion of this great work.

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THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN PASTORS IN MAINLINE PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

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Directed by: Randall Capps, Cecile Garmon, and Whitney Peake

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Subsequent to receiving official approval from denominational authorities more than 40 years ago, an increasing number of women appear to be expressing a ministerial call upon their lives and entering pastoral leadership. Many women pastors find acceptance in mainline protestant denominations (MPD). Yet, despite improvements, women still face unique challenges in ministry compared with men. Nevertheless, they continue to pursue opportunities in ministry. Mentoring helps offset impediments and provides a professional development outlet for enhancing skill sets and empowering women to overcome these hurdles. Thus, the purpose behind this study remains to identify challenges faced by women pastors related to acceptance in MPD and to examine the mentoring models used, if any, for their professional development. Seven mainline denominations served as focal points for this endeavor: United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church, the Episcopal Church, American Baptist Church, United Church of Christ, and Christian Church Disciples of Christ.

A qualitative, case study design provides the framework for this study. One female pastor from each of the seven denominations was purposely selected to participate in a semi-structured interview. Additionally, eight “wild card” options were intentionally chosen for contribution: two male leaders, two professors, two lay members, and two additional female pastors. Two research questions divided into 10 interview questions, as

well as a demographic questionnaire encompassed the data gathering materials for this examination. Summarized lists of challenges experienced and mentoring models used captured four main themes relating to journey, challenges, acceptance, and mentoring. Almost all findings for this study are supported by empirically-based literature. Conclusively, many women in pastoral professions experience challenges and limitations from peers, congregants, and the public when accepting and pursuing a call to ministry. Despite the seemingly overwhelming data that suggest women in ministry face an excessive amount of challenges, some remain who not only support the concept, but also embrace it. This leads to empowerment for women that provides satisfying and fulfilling work which produces motivation and retention, not to mention spiritual and worthwhile benefits.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Lehman (2002) noted that one of the most significant developments in the life of the church in the United States was the ordination and expansion of women clergy. Within the first two thirds of the 20th century, this concept had begun to rapidly fall in line with the women's feminist movement for equality (Lehman, 2002). As an innovative approach to ministry, it received larger rates of adoption from mainline protestant denominations (MPD) than from other religious entities (Lehman, 2002). Although some spiritual institutions remain today that do not endorse women pastors, many denominations have experienced a rise in the number of women entering pastoral ministry over the last several years (Johns & Watson, 2006; Lehman, 2002). This expansion of "women pastors occupying spaces, places, and roles traditionally gendered male exposes new ways of thinking about the female subject-in-relation" (Bammert, 2010, p. 153). Thus, scholars have spent a great deal of energy researching and debating whether females remain more oriented toward pastoral ministry than men due to relational character, reduced interest in job status, and power sharing or democratic leadership styles (Perl, 2002).

Although culturally progressive, this trend also discloses the notion that women appear to endure unique challenges in pursuing a professional quest within traditionally patriarchal organizations that many career fields do not impose (Shehan, Schultz, & Wiggins-Frame, 1999). Despite the increase, much remains to be discovered about their effectiveness as leaders (Johns & Watson, 2006). Considering the challenges overcome in acceptance of women pastors serving in MPD, while also exploring the impact of mentoring, may shed light on this observation.

Definitions

This study references the terms “pastor” or “clergy” in relation to essentials found within church congregations that prompt worship, preaching, teaching, and parish oversight (LeGrand, Proeschold-Bell, James, & Wallace, 2013). The terms also include professional roles such as caregiving and mentoring, decisional aspects, and dispensing informational resources (LeGrand et al., 2013). Additionally, “ordination” serves as a term utilized throughout the text that may appear unfamiliar to some readers. Moreover, those who peruse this documentation may have different understandings for the concept of ordination based upon life experiences and denominational uniqueness. Lehman (2002) called this ordination rite an order or setting apart for individuals as ministers.

Aligned with Charlton (1997), this study supports the following definition: ordination means that a minister “can officially perform the sacraments of the church: marriage, burial, and communion” (p. 599). Some organizations add baptism by immersion to this list as well. Ordination remains a significant formal process, usually administered when one assumes an actual church position such as pastor and affirms not only church support, but sometimes denominational endorsement.

Another common ministerial expression incorporated within this document equates to the notion of one’s “calling,” which can mean different things that involve one overlying precept. Thus, this edict refers to an individual’s impressions, beliefs, and/or perceptions of receiving a divine appointment through nudging, conviction, gut feeling, etc.... and that God has set apart their lives for an exclusive role in ministry. This not only refers to pastors, but also missionaries, teachers, speakers, and other types of lay journeys for which a person has a specific giftedness (childcare, attending to the elderly,

providing meals or visitation to those in need, and an infinite combination of possibilities). Some also may use the terms “called” and/or “calling” to reference placement in a church or other entity that matches with their professional giftedness or as a first-time pastorate. As such, throughout the interview process in Bammert’s (2010) study, the term calling included a “process of ordination as well as coming to their current position of pastor” (p. 161). Licensing refers to the public approval granted by a church recognizing a minister and may incorporate the process prior to a formal ordination procedure. Some states require it solely for marriage services. Some mainlines vary in whether licensing comes through a formal study program or a clergy simply goes to a local courthouse to fill out a form and to pay a fee. Others may not use the concept of licensing but focus primarily on ordination formalities. Some pastors feel their calling comes from God and that human certificate styles of recognition remain unnecessary. Those individuals may decline formal protocol and exercise sole satisfaction in God’s appointment for their ministerial journey.

Denominations

Stump (1986) noted that “three clusters of Protestant denominations accounted for the clear majority of women clergy in the United States in the mid-1970s” (p. 341). According to Stump, MPD contributed the most to the increased numbers of women clergy within church bodies in the 1970s. Stump also remarked that urban cultures provide more receptivity than rural cultures. In referring to American MPD, this examination includes seven denominations occasionally referred to as the seven sisters: United Methodist Church (UMC), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Presbyterian Church (PC-USA), the Episcopal Church, American Baptist Church (ABC-

USA), United Church of Christ (UCC), and Christian Church Disciples of Christ (DOC) (Dart, 2009; Harrington & Stanke, 2014). At times women pastors will turn aside from their denominational upbringing due to a lack of acceptance. Traditionally, Methodist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, and United Church of Christ affiliations seem to be preferred options (Durso, 2013). Termed as “she-preachers,” Durso (2013) communicated that these MPD not only benefit from women traditionally raised in their organizations, but also from female clergy moving into their denomination from unaccepting churches.

United Methodist Church (UMC)

Reported as the second largest protestant denomination in the United States (US), the UMC boasts 7.7 million members (LeGrand et al., 2013). Campbell-Reed (2013) reported that the UMC experienced an increase in women pastors “in the first decade of the twenty-first century” (p. 55). Between 1977 and 1992, women clergy in the UMC increased by a staggering 1217% (Hunter & Sargeant, 1993). A salary study in 1998 affirmed that female clergy represented 20% of their pastors, which grew to 29% by 2008 (Campbell-Reed, 2013). Undergoing extensive training, UMC pastors receive pastoral appointment from their denomination as part of their career progression (LeGrand et al., 2013). The UMC began ordaining women around 1956 (Harrington & Stanke, 2014).

M. Madeline Southard (1877-1967) remains largely known as the pioneer woman who worked diligently to pursue ecclesiastical rights for women within UMC congregations (Du Mez, 2014). According to Du Mez (2014), Southard’s journals include countless entries detailing conflict, domestic ideologies, and identity strife relating to her role in womanhood. Resonating with a more egalitarian view on women

in ministry, Southard's work for institutional reform prevails over her theological positioning (Du Mez, 2014).

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Tunheim and DuChene (2016) reported that Lutherans comprise 70.5 million members globally. Embracing women's role in ministry, the ELCA denomination with more than four million members elected their first presiding female bishop in 2013 (Bailey, 2013). The awardee credited the appointment to forward-looking tenure on behalf of the outgoing male leadership (Bailey, 2013). According to Tunheim and DuChene, 14% of women members serve in roles as bishops, which has increased from 10% in 2011. Bishops fulfill complex leadership roles that can include over 150 churches and their pastors (Tunheim & DuChene, 2016). The authors noted that women representing more than 50% of the Lutheran church population remain grossly underrepresented in such senior executive level roles despite their increases. The ELCA denomination began ordaining women in 1970, but it was not until 1992 that its first female bishop was elected to serve in a synod (Tunheim & DuChene, 2016). Tunheim and DuChene reported that ELCA remains the largest Lutheran denomination.

Focusing on a theoretical learning frame, Tunheim and DuChene (2016) found five themes in discovering the path of women pastors in ELCA: the journey, spouse support, mentors, challenges faced, and required leadership competencies. All the bishops had varying experiences, but their common ground for the journey began with their calling to the pastorate (Tunheim & DuChene, 2016). The authors also noted the importance of support and encouragement provided by their spouses, and all had mentors and experienced significant challenges. Sexism, immense workloads, and personal issues

permeated the list of obstacles. Leadership competencies included oratory skills, flexibility, ethical practices, ambition, patience, compassion, listening skills, authenticity, and perseverance.

Presbyterian Church (PC-USA)

The PC-USA recorded over 1.6 million in membership at the end of 2014. Slightly down from 2012 and 2013, 42.5% belong to mid-size congregations ranging from 150-599 members (Jackson, 2015). The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPUSA) merged with the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) in 1983 to form the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PC-USA) (Chaves, 1996). At the time both had been implementing a practice of ordaining women, “the UPUSA since 1956 and the PCUS since 1964” (Chaves, 1996, p. 857). In 1973 Presbyterians reported a 1% total in their churches as women pastors (Campbell-Reed, 2013). Campbell-Reed (2013) discussed significant increases in the years to follow: 8% 1984, 13% 1990, 22% 1999, and by 2008 the percentage grew to 29%, constituting 4,200 women.

Specialized clergy improved during this time frame as well, beginning with 4% in 1979 to 17% in 1990 and encompassing 45% in 2008 (Campbell-Reed, 2013). Women clergy increased in the PC-USA by 657% between 1977 and 1992 (Hunter & Sargeant, 1993). In 2016, the PC-USA celebrated 60 years of women clergy (Hunter, 2016). Hunter (2016) reflected on many great accomplishments for female clergy throughout the years, beginning with the Reverend Margaret Towner being ordained as the first woman minister in 1956. Bearing in mind diversity, Hunter also indicated that the first African American woman received ordination in 1974, the first Hispanic/Latina woman in 1979,

and the first Korean-American woman and the first Native American woman in 1987. Reporting from a 2008 survey, Lindsey (2010) observed that PC-USA congregations appear to be getting older with most members age 65 and above, and a steady increase continues in female clergy.

Episcopal Church

In 2006 the Episcopal Church reported a membership of 2.1 million active, baptized congregants (Gryboski, 2011). Gryboski (2011) discussed that, by 2010, the number had decreased to 1.96 million. Hadaway (2014) reported that women make up 60% of Episcopal congregations. Similar to Presbyterians, Hadaway also noted that membership tends to be older, with over 31% at least 65 years of age.

The church unofficially ordained women in 1974 through an irregular series of events involving 11 women from Philadelphia (Foss, 1984). Although the ordination of women was permitted by church law, organizational constitution did not require it (Sullins, 2000). According to Sullins (2000), this created an opportunity for formal opposition that was tolerated and accepted. Despite a hard-fought journey into acceptance, the Episcopal church currently appears more accepting of women pastors than in its earlier years. According to Hunter and Sargeant (1993), the Episcopal Church experienced a 13-fold increase in women clergy from 94-1200 between 1977 and 1992. Episcopal parish clergy (2007) reported that women clergy represented 31.4% in domestic diocese. Hadaway's (2014) report noted a slight increase in 2014, finding that "36% of rectors and vicars and priests-in-charge are female (excluding interim and supply priests)" (p. 4).

American Baptist Church (ABC-USA)

Beginning in the early 17th century, the ABC-USA boasted a membership of 1.3 million while priding itself on being an exceptionally diverse denomination (“10 Facts,” n.d.). May Jones was the first ordination of Northern Baptist in 1882, creating quite a controversy (Durso, 2013). Transforming to an open embrace of women pastors, the ABC-USA reported a total of 485 (9.4 %) women pastors in 2012 (Campbell-Reed, 2013; Durso, 2013). Including associate/assistant women pastors raises the number to 682 (11.8%) (Campbell-Reed, 2013). To continue preparing women for future roles as pastors, the ABC-USA promotes the concept of enrollment into seminaries as an accepted norm (Campbell-Reed, 2013). Campbell-Reed (2013) noted that this practice creates higher than average responses, as females made up 57% of those enrolled in 2005. Additionally, Campbell-Reed stated that, in 2005, women represented 37% of ABC-USA faculty. Campbell-Reed and Durso (2006) reported that 410 women served as pastors for the American Baptist denomination in 2003, which represented 9% of their clerical leadership for that year.

Although the ABC-USA formally addressed gender equality in 1965, its African American she-pastors have not received opportunistic equivalence in their congregations (Lyons, 2013). Lyons (2013) reported that females make up 75% of their churches, “yet, women constitute less than 10% of church leadership and about 1% of African American Baptist pastors” (p. 79). However, African American pastors have increased in attendance in seminaries jumping from 5%-8% in the 1970s to 49% currently, which improves enrollment by 1000% (Lyons, 2013). Despite 9.8% representing women

pastors in the ABC-USA by 2011, only 1.7% were African American females (Lyons, 2013).

United Church of Christ (UCC)

Primarily in the Great Lakes, mid-Atlantic, and New England areas of the US, at the end of 2015 the UCC included over 5,000 congregations with membership greater than 914,000 (“The United Church of Christ,” 2016). The United Church of Christ (2016) report conveyed that “approximately 50.9% of active, non-retired Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ identified as male, 49.0% identified as female, and 0.1% identified as transgender/gender-variant” (p. 18). “Over half of co-pastors (55.2%) and interim/designated-term/supply pastors (51.2%) are female, and two-thirds (66.4%) are associate/assistant pastors” (p. 19). In the 1850s some UCC churches began ordaining women into pastoral roles (Harrington & Stanke, 2014). According to Hunter and Sargeant (1993), the UCC increased its women clergy by 452% (400-1,807) between 1977 and 1992. Hunter and Sargeant elaborated that, during the same time frame, the male clergy decreased from 9,207 in 1977 to 8,788 in 1992. Interviewing a female pastor serving in a UCC, Gellatly (2003) reported that three years of seminary and field service prepared her for her current role. The pastor communicated that the UCC remains a liberal organization that welcomes diversity. Additionally, she noted that growing up under a woman pastor created a normalcy for her in her current career field.

Christian Church Disciples of Christ (DOC)

The Christian Church (n.d.) reported that there remain over 3,000 congregations with more than 660,000 members. The DOC organization also communicated that their

minister total exceeds 7,000 (“Christian Church,” n.d.). However, the number of women clergy serving in DOC organizations remains unknown.

One female pastor within the DOC organization began in a small struggling church (Pershey, 2011). According to Pershey (2011), leaving the little church and pursuing another opportunity was a grief-laden process for her. During her tenure at the church, the pastor felt heavy-laden and burdened by the overwhelming workload, yet felt guilty for having to leave them. As an ordained DOC, this pastor appreciates the ethos and sense of community experienced within her denomination. Pershey noted that this pastor loves the way in which mentoring, peer support, and continued education benefits and contributes to her success within the denomination.

Problem Statement

Demonstrating uniqueness in civil society, protestant churches function as organizations following a statement of faith rather than ordering themselves around mission, purpose, and goals (Bammert, 2010). Bammert (2010) noted that churches do not necessarily forego a mission statement, purpose, and/or set of goals; the priority appears more focused on beliefs and impacts of faith. Focusing on God’s communication to His children and sharing the Gospel of Christ with others, churches sometimes face challenges when addressing the diversity of creation, idealism, and gender assumptions. Bammert even elaborated that, for some, the concept of evangelism far outweighs a need for addressing women’s feelings of oppression regarding their gendered role prescriptions and professional endeavors. This line of reasoning causes deflating boundaries and hierarchical relationships between spreading the Gospel message and social justice.

Resistance remains prevalent for women pastors despite improvement and growth (Hartman, 2013). According to Hartman (2013), female clergy endure unsupportive churches, challenges in higher education related to their chosen careers, push back from well-meaning loved ones, and community avoidance. Contrastingly, women pastors reported supportive encounters based upon curiosity and intrigue. Furthermore, Hartman indicated that female clergy in first-time calls can feel isolated and will benefit from the support systems found in mentoring and coaching exchanges.

Additionally, Chang (1997) reported that at times it can take women clergy 33% longer to secure their first position as a pastor compared with their male counterparts. Chang noted that this discrepancy occurs due to congregational resistance in hiring women and failure of replacement staff to recommend female clergy to churches soliciting pastors. Historical components and levels of denominational acceptance also may impact the length it takes for women pastors to secure parish employment. “The United Methodist Church has the smallest sex difference in terms of mean survival time” (Chang, 1997, p. 617) and hiring promptness due to its placement system. Thus, the evolution of women pastors in MPD regarding challenges, acceptance, and professional development found in mentoring continues to provide reasoning for examination and understanding. To this researcher’s knowledge, studies remain non-existent relating to a specific relationship between the seven sister churches (Dart, 2009) and the three areas of interest: challenges, acceptance, and mentoring.

Purpose of the Study

Many women express a ministerial calling upon their lives. In fact, Strachan (2010) discussed that a Barna study reported “10 percent of all Protestant pastors are

female, up from 5 percent between 1990 and 1999” (p. 19). Strachan added that the Barna group asserted 58% of those women serve in MPD. Middle-age women in this capacity exceed men educationally, in that 77% possess a seminary degree compared with 66% of male protestant pastors (Strachan, 2010). Newkirk and Cooper (2013) discussed the same concept when noting that “in most seminary classes, women outnumber the men” (p. 338). Strachan also found reduced salaries compared with men (possibly due to women serving in smaller congregations).

Even with less than favorable conditions such as reduced pay, smaller churches, and declining communities, women clergy continue to communicate job satisfaction (McDuff, 2001). Finlay (1996) indicated that women remain more likely to be in associate pastor or assistant roles than men. Although discrimination and prejudice exist in various environments, some women prefer to stay in placement roles other than solo or senior positions (Finlay, 1996). Despite growth, not all denominations or entities support or encourage the concept of women as senior pastors. According to statistics discoursed by Strachan (2010), only 42% of churches outside the mainline employ women pastors; yet, Rossi and Marcus (2006) confirmed that American women comprise 61% of churchgoers.

The ministry remains a male dominated profession (Newkirk & Cooper, 2013); female pastors not only endure discrimination from men, but from women as well. Newkirk and Cooper (2013) communicated that “due to plain old jealousy, some women impede the opportunities for other women to advance in the church” (p. 338). Insecurity, role perceptions, and personality flaws also contribute to the stigma (Newkirk & Cooper, 2013). Despite trials and tribulations, many women pursue ministerial professions. They

use proficiencies, demonstrations of guidance, support, and development to benefit the livelihoods of their congregations and the wellbeing of their parishioners.

According to McDuff (2001), role satisfaction cultivates women into effective leaders as ministers. Dahlvig and Longman (2014) addressed motivators for the advancement of women in leadership roles, including convictions encompassing, awareness of calling and leadership giftedness, and role model/mentoring resources. Talley (2008) defined mentoring as “a creative method of promoting professional development that sets in motion the process of self-actualization and growth” (p. 331). Ngomane and Mahlangu (2014) discussed that mentoring provides critical development and contributes to resourceful transitioning. Selzer (2008) conferred that mentoring prior to full-time entry into ministry can better prepare pastors for long-term careers. Thus, the purposes behind this study are to discern challenges faced by women pastors in MPD in accruing acceptance and to examine the mentoring models used, if any, for their professional development.

Research Questions

Agee (2009) emphasized that studies must have a plan. Particularly, research question design remains imperative in developing a scholarly research quest that generates the information truly desired by an inquirer (Agee, 2009). Due to the importance of guiding questions to succinctly capture data, this author strives to fully deliver a well-rounded perspective on challenges related to acceptance for women pastors in MPD and mentoring. Specifically, this study includes two questions that should generate desired responses in acquiring data saturation providing an exploratory function (Agee, 2009).

1. What challenges did women pastors face related to acceptance in MPD?
2. What mentoring models were used in the professional development of women pastors in MPD?

Significance of the Study

The practical, scholarly contribution for this research pursuit remains to ascertain the challenges that women face in ministry, despite receiving formal acceptance and recognition more than 40 years ago. Additionally, it seems important to comprehend the impact of mentoring on those who attained positional respect and acknowledgment. To this researcher's knowledge, no specific study has combined challenges, acceptance, and mentoring models in relation to women pastors in MPD. Specifically, this case study focuses on the seven MPD previously listed. Although various religious institutions and their unique characteristics have been studied throughout history, the review of literature does not reveal the specific grouping addressed in this research component. Finally, it remains the desire of this researcher to use this inquiry as a resourceful tool for empowering future leaders in ministry with educational and scholarly preparation resources. Thus, this examination aspires to bring well-rounded clarification and advanced awareness to church organizations, ministers, and congregations regarding challenges, acceptance, and mentoring phenomenon as they pertain to women clergy for continued progression.

Delimitations

“Delimitations are the factors that prevent you from claiming that your findings are true for all people in all times and places” (Bryant, 2004, p. 57). For this investigation, the subjects represent other women in similar environments, although not

to a full extent, as each individual's experience was slightly to completely different from others. A common benefit involves uniqueness due to rich, thick descriptions as discovered through the interview process. An ongoing shortcoming includes the difficulty in the ability to fully generalize within and beyond western cultures.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Protestantism experienced its first major split in 1529 when Martin Luther and other biblical scholars could not agree on a set of theological issues (Harrington & Stanke, 2014). Two main branches of reformed denominations emerged from the conflict (Harrington & Stanke, 2014). Harrington and Stanke (2014) explained that this background birthed mainline and evangelical distinctions. Mainline churches generally accepted liberal theology, evolution, and modern reasoning that opened opportunities for “personal, intellectual, philosophical, and existential reflection” (p. 2).

Historically, women have maintained an active and prominent role in the life of the church. Furthermore, cyclical seasons of proactive feminism have generated an increase in leadership roles for females within various congregations and/or denominations. During the 1970s religious congregations in the US began to develop attitudinal differences regarding urbanization and the movement of women into non-traditional roles (Stump, 1986). The sharpest rise in women becoming clergy occurred within that time frame when numbers soared from 7,000 to 16,000 (Stump, 1986). Representing one of the most male-dominated occupations in the US (Stump, 1986), women clergy increased from 4% in 1977 to 8% in 1986 (Hunter & Sargeant, 1993). By 1992 that number had increased again to roughly 10%, as noted by Hunter and Sargeant (1993). Winseman (2004) reported that, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number rose slightly since 1992 to 13%. The author also noted that the prominent increase occurred in MPD.

A survey conducted in 1987 suggested that women entering pastoral positions brought liberal commitments in religion, theological discussions, and cultural values to

their congregations, compared to 24% of men entering the ministry (Hunter & Sargeant, 1993). Additionally, distinctive differences between men and women came to light regarding the Bible's infallibility, morality including sexual preference such as homosexuality, the value of human life, adversities regarding capitalism, and references regarding God's judgment. The study reported that women were not only more moderate than male pastors, but seven of 10 women felt they held liberal values more so than their congregants.

Hunter and Sargeant (1993) also elaborated on whether broad-minded, feministic agendas and intentions to eradicate or to transform patriarchal systems found within church structures impacted their levels of acceptance. Moreover, Hunter and Sargeant suggested that the increase in female pastors within church bodies possibly created a clerical crisis that encompasses a loss of status and power. The authors also discoursed that the feminine movement within churches should not be considered as simply an ideological event but, rather, should be taken seriously and may in fact be promoting legitimate changes creeping into a broader culture.

Battling between traditionalism and feminism, and progressiveness versus conservativeness, Hunter and Sargeant (1993) believed that women's issues will continue to permeate culture and play a critical, central role in society. Furthermore, the issue remains greater than differences between men and women and forms philosophical questions that impact cultural meanings of womanhood. Distinctively, Hunter and Sargeant argued that feminist theology raises questions that anthropologically influence cultural productivity and civilization impacting "authority, the meaning of tradition, the ontology of sacredness, and the relation of the human experience to the sacred" (p. 570).

According to Chaves (1996), American religion experienced its most noteworthy transformation in the 20th century when women gained organizational acceptance into clerical roles. Chaves noted that this revolution inspires many sociological inquiries. A review of literature regarding the challenges faced by women pastors in MPD, acceptance dynamics, and mentoring influences provided further clarification on the inspiration behind such inquiries into human development sciences.

Challenges

According to Rossi and Marcus (2006), women comprise 61% of Americans attending religious organizations. Furthermore, the percentage of female seminary students continues to increase annually, growing from 4.7% in 1972 to 31% in 2003 (Van Biema et al., 2004). Although women exhibit a significant presence, only 12% serve in clerical roles in the 15 largest protestant denominations (Rossi & Marcus, 2006).

Law Exemptions and Policies

Despite growth, women pastors cannot draw upon equal opportunity laws within church institutions (Van Biema et al., 2004) in obtaining ordination from conservative entities. Unlike secular organizations, churches remain exempt from gender equality legislation (Page, 2014). Thus, women added to their dilemmas by striving to enter masculine domains without public governance to protect their environments (Page, 2014). Additionally, Miller-McLemore (2009) contributed to the discussions on policy, regulation, and legislation when she discussed that denominational policies do not necessarily translate to local congregations and their willingness for acceptance; e.g., her denomination accepts women; however, it struggles to fully include women by reinterpreting doctrinal statements, reshaping hymns, and modifying congregational

prayers. The author reminisced that her own ordination did not come easy in 1984 due to her personal doubts and struggle with identity issues. Miller-McLemore conveyed that encouragement from others and support in designing a work/home life-balance that fit her lifestyle moved her forward in her role as a female pastor.

Gender Barriers and Stereotypes

Frame and Shehan (2005) found that gender-related resistance from males and females also creates challenges for women in ministry. Laff (2007) noted that “gender-based stereotyping and workplace barriers, not ambition” (p. 35) hold women back from achieving top-level positions compared with men. Hauser (2014) affirmed Laff’s discussion by asserting that male-dominated professions and a lack of understanding in work-life balance create hardships for women in their careers. According to Hauser, this hardship may decrease when organizations focus on the needs of women employees in pursuing their talent, provide flexibility for work-life balance, monitor culture of the institution, and provide resources to address their unique plight.

Laff (2007) also stated that women should be more proactive in asking for help, should be more open to helping one another, and should develop self-promotion prowess. Hauser (2014) agreed that women can aid their personal situations by developing and mapping out specific career goals, assuming risks, researching available resources, and enlisting the help of a mentor or sponsor when no formal program exists. Both Laff and Hauser indicated that male peers often provide significant inspiration compared to peers of the same gender and that women should engage men in the support of their professional development.

Although Laff (2007) and Hauser (2014) provided insight into the way in which women can improve their outcomes, Van Biema et al. (2004) described a situation that contrasted their discussions. Having ordained women for years, one female pastor nearly achieved a position as the first female clergy in a large flagship church with a mega membership, also referred to as a tall-steeple church (Van Biema et al., 2004). However, the scene unfolded when she unexpectedly left her job and moved back home, citing unfortunate issues over power, authority, and lack of respect (Van Biema et al., 2004). This high-profile frustration reflected the glass ceiling difficulties experienced by women clergy and feminists across the board (Van Biema et al., 2004). Van Biema et al. also communicated that some studies report little change regarding women clergy since 1998; in fact, possible regression has occurred due to male backlash.

Additionally, Van Biema et al. (2004) narrated a journey of a female Episcopalian clergy that experienced obstacles from her role in pastoral leadership. Showing CEO-like qualities of vision, delegation, and decision making, this highly esteemed Episcopalian female preacher experienced sore repercussions for hiring a fellow female associate minister. Van Biema et al. noted that the strife came as feminists blamed her for no longer pursuing their agendas. Feeling as though the move to pursue women in church leadership roles had been achieved, the female pastor was pursuing a charismatic directive that focused on theological conservatism as well as social advocacy.

Career Obstacles and Leadership

Bledsoe and Setterlund (2015) discussed that all pastors face countless challenges requiring support systems and self-care practices for resilience and perseverance. Frame and Shehan (2005) stated that women in pastoral care must overcome obstacles such as

low salaries, stress, and fatigue. Longer turnaround for placement in churches and smaller wages generate notable distinctions between male and female clergy (Finlay, 1996). Finlay (1996) suggested that women may be assuming roles in smaller congregations due to realistic reasoning regarding possible discrimination. Other challenges include disparities in church position or placement.

According to Djupe (2014), women typically hold less lucrative positions in church leadership than men, many times in small or rural congregations that create other challenges beyond normalcy, such as workload differentiations due to fewer members to assist. Djupe posted that, from information gathered within his population sample, a typical church size for male pastors in ELCA congregations equals 330 and women typically shepherd 60 members; PC-USA men typically pastor 395 and women lead 91; UMC male clergy support 127 members compared with 37 for females; and UCC totals represent 163 for men and 47 for women. Bledsoe and Setterlund (2015) noted that mentoring can provide an avenue for maneuvering through the overwhelming demands, even when leading smaller congregations.

In considering challenges, Fobes (2001) studied the way “gender was used as a cultural resource by lay men and women in their search for a new priest” (p. 89). This occurred under the pretense of using a gender-blind search, in which personnel committee members delegitimized gender as a criterion while denying gender relevance among candidates (Fobes, 2001). Conversations and observations within the selection committee demonstrated to Fobes that, while denominations may approve the role of women as clergy, local church bodies exercise autonomy and find loopholes to suit their preferential agendas. A study by Spencer (2009) found that women clergy can overcome

challenges in ministry by remembering the authority of their calling, concentrating on those who offer support and encouragement, and reflecting on one's source of inspiration.

Lummis and Nesbitt (2000) wrote that female clergy gravitate toward rural areas or inner city missions versus a pursuit of the ministerial career ladder that leads to senior positions or denominational executive roles. Unfortunately, failure to advance in the pastoral career ladder leads to limited decision-making power within one's denomination and creates a glass ceiling effect. Additionally, women pastors engage in more democratic decision-making practices and focus on social needs (Lummis & Nesbitt, 2000). Paradoxically, the extra caring work and nurturing that women pastors provide to their congregations adds to female clergy stresses and results in higher levels of depression among ordained women (Shehan et al., 1999). Shehan et al. (1999) noted that this creates reduced levels of respect and inspires bitterness and resentment in some female pastors.

Metaphorically, women pastors navigate a labyrinth in relation to church leadership (Spencer, 2009). Contributors to Spencer's (2009) article stated that the pastoral journey can be a tunnel of complex twists and unexpected turns. Navigating cultural nuances, discerning God's will in their calling versus humanistic mandates, learning to actively listen, seeking courage, and tiptoeing around thin-skinned congregants create the intricacies of the labyrinth (Spencer, 2009). Cook and Glass (2014) discussed the underrepresentation of women in most organizations in top leadership positions. Regardless of persistent struggles, Rossi and Marcus (2006) noted that women remain diligent in securing executive leadership positions within their national level organizations. Cook and Glass agreed that, despite under-representation,

some women make it to the top. Their article strived to determine the conditions that lead to women achieving top leadership roles and learned that diverse decision making, rather than performance, leads to a high level of attainment for women. This selection process also enhances elements of tenure within the organizations (Cook & Glass, 2014).

In discussing a decision to become a pastor, many women clergy talked about various struggles that include forced seminary education beyond the Master of Divinity in securing ordination from denominational affiliation; lengthy debates with church boards, districts, and regional elements; and rejection, to name a few (Bammert, 2010). Struggling for years to find an accepted place in ministry, one woman noted that ordination and pastoral appointment had not been an easy journey (Bennett, 2015). Additionally, Bennett (2015) reported that men are not the problem and have been encouraging. The struggle in this story finds its foundation in congregational response, as the institution had misguided theological understanding versus a personal grudge. Bennett, like many writers, noted that the struggle appears excessively overwhelming for some women so they withdraw from their quest. Others may pursue and receive ordination; however, rather than serve in a church position, they find roles as hospital ministers, in the military as chaplains, or in other non-profits (Bennett, 2015). When asked the reason why women continue in their pursuit as pastors despite difficulties, the response referred to the clarity of a strong calling (Bammert, 2010).

Demographic Struggles

One's race or ethnicity also can create undue difficulties in becoming a pastor. Lyons (2013) discussed three challenges that African American women endured in their ministerial calling: the promotion of church autonomy creates difficulty for promoting

ordination for females on the local level; inaccurate information regarding gender and race generates false assumptions pertaining to women pastors; and African American women suffer from a triple consciousness due to race, gender, and class that produces oppressive power bases in theological environments. Furthermore, divorce rates for African American clergywomen remain at 23%, which triples the male rate and spawns fear for its potential female leadership. Such challenges prompt African American women to switch denominations to more accepting affiliations such as Methodist or independent Pentecostals (Lyons, 2013).

Gender, age, and family status can create hardship on pastoral candidates, as women express an obvious awareness of search committee hesitation (Pranoto & Durso, 2016). Featuring six women under the age of 40, Pranoto and Durso (2016) discussed the struggles faced by young, single women anxious over hiring processes. Williams (2014) added to the conversation by addressing challenges faced by single women pastors. According to Williams, church entities have striven to define her through gender and marital status personally, professionally, and spiritually. Williams discoursed on discrimination against singles as leaders for ministry, arguing that such headship may be the actual connection for reaching unchurched groups. Williams suggested that churches may offset this stigma by hiring for individual strength and growth potential versus prefixed ideologies centered around gender or marital status.

Home-Career Balance

Pranoto and Durso (2016) noted that female clergy who mother small children also endure anxiousness in communicating with a search committee when considering the possibility for church employment. Frame and Shehan (2005) affirmed this challenge,

adding that the two main characteristics affecting women in ministry include balancing work and familial duties. Furthermore, role theory and grounded theory help to explore experiences and implications for young mothers once they have entered pastoral ministry or those who find themselves in a position of negotiating maternity leave (Sharp & Huebner, 2014). Very little has been studied about women clergy transitioning into motherhood and pursuing maternity leave (Sharp & Huebner, 2014). Sharp and Huebner (2014) indicated that this topic needs examination since churches remain exempt from the Family Medical Leave Act of 2003. This challenge to pastoral care has generated unclear expectations and confusion regarding acceptable practices (Sharp & Huebner, 2014). Sharp and Huebner's study generated a noticeable need for churches to develop policies regarding maternity to reduce the stress of women pastors in self-advocacy, it brought to light the need for congregations to minister to the female clergy in this mile marker of life, and it brought attention to churches and pastors who need to consider exiting strategies should the woman pastor decide to stay in the home and raise her children.

Furthermore, women pastors face traditional career structure challenges that impact domestic responsibilities. In years past churches hiring male pastors automatically assumed that the spouse would be active and influential in their positional roles. Frame and Shehan (2005) referred to this operational involvement as a two-person career structure that includes active participation from one's spouse without additional pay. Most male spouses have careers and may not be as involved as the traditional housewife. Shifts in this dynamic occur when husbands demonstrate minimal immersion in their wives' position as pastor. Some female clergy encourage their husband's lack of contribution as a professional necessity. Frame and Shehan argued that incorporating

career counselors into their professional journeys would offset these challenges and enhance role satisfaction. Despite concerns, search committees have been moving beyond barriers in hiring a woman pastor.

Other Challenging Concerns

In addition to the commonly known challenges with discrimination and life-work balance, some women pastors have encountered challenges that may appear less obvious, such as role confusion and donning sacred clothing. Page (2014) discussed that women pastors experience challenges and role confusion due to complexities in the design of holy apparel, as it was traditionally designed and equipped for male bodies. This specialized lens offering an additional distinction regarding gender inclusion may create innovative diffusions and more exploration into the sociological, spiritual, and psychological interest regarding women in ministry. Surprisingly, clothing contributes to the challenges women face in achieving acceptance.

Because ministry and pastoral leadership incorporates many duties, such as preaching, teaching, fund-raising, counseling, funerals, weddings, etc., identity confusion and systems of isolation or loneliness develop, leaving the individual feeling overwhelmed and defeated (Frame & Shehan, 2005). Frame and Shehan (2005) stated that the UMC adds stress to this environment due to its demands for clergy relocation every few years. Bumgardner (2015) noted that, with this extent of adversity, at some time in their pastoral careers two thirds experience thoughts of leaving. However, most women pastors toying with the idea of leaving ministry due to the constraints decide to stay based upon their deep sense of calling. Bumgardner communicated that women staying in the ministry feel it remains their life's work and purpose.

Literature has conveyed that women pastors face a multitude of challenges in achieving acceptance. Some obstacles even parallel those that male pastors endure. However, many appear strangely unique to women due to gender roles as defined within one's culture; i.e., one female Methodist minister in rural Missouri reported feelings of isolation and limited income as challenging in fulfilling her God-given calling (Albee, 2000). Yet, despite hardship, she did not feel the difficulties impacted her experience with acceptance.

Subordination, Feminism, and Identity

Rhetorical examination also warrants discussion in understanding the challenges faced by women pastors. "The study of women's rhetoric is a study in paradox, pain, and punishment" (Jablonski, 1988, p. 164). Traditionally, speaking out in public or out of turn has created exclusion, dislike, humility, and condemnation for women. Yet, historically women have been "the moral guardians of society" (Jablonski, 1988, p. 164). Such paradoxical mannerisms promote impressionable notions and belief systems about womanhood (Jablonski, 1988). Furthermore, Jablonski (1988) found that women enable this crippling concept and participate in its longevity by allowing it to continue and not rising with other reformers to defeat its continuity. While many remain complacent, Jablonski noted that some reformers not only seek transformation, but strive to eradicate established patriarchal institutions.

Historically understood as a masculine space, the concept for women occupying the pulpit also creates disturbing rhetorical perceptions of disruption, reshaping authority, and identity crisis for male leadership (Bammert, 2010). According to Bammert (2010), the confusion and distraction stems from cultural commitments to imagined qualities.

Pushing forward with an imagined past and idealized future creates a drive for feminist posture, change agents, and an understanding of faith and practice when working through the intricacies of nostalgic desires regarding women as mainline protestant pastors (Bammert, 2010). Furthermore, Bammert espoused that the dilemma finds its origins in women's refusal to accept a divine directive toward subordination. The rhetoric of social change presents opportunities for females to recreate themselves as they "chip away at more than social norms in their process of becoming Christian pastors" (Bammert, 2010, p. 165).

Nesbitt (1997) asserted that feminism and the equal rights movement may have created more negative responses toward women in ministry, which reduces opportunities and attainment. Occurring simultaneously with secular occupational movements, the push for recognition of female clergy within MPD may have suppressed women's labor efforts into patterns of lower-level achievement (Nesbitt, 1997). Nesbitt noted that MPD traditionally have been open to secular goals and liberalities. Thus, it may not be that stronger suppression occurred but, rather, that no significance prevailed because the churches were already in the habit of ordaining women as clergy (Nesbitt, 1997).

Lummis and Nesbitt (2000) noted that women with strong feminist beliefs appear more proactive in climbing the ranks into senior pastoral leadership to advocate for change than those with fewer feminist tendencies. Furthermore, females with more traditional views engage in additional and useful ministries within their local communities. Lummis and Nesbitt agreed that, despite advancement and progress, some clergywomen pursuing equality have done more harm than good in reducing effectiveness for acceptance. Despite losses, the gains have been prominent to the point

that the authors established the movement must continue to press forward as more women accept senior pastorates and executive roles on regional and national levels.

Many clergywomen experience severe turbulence in forming a ministerial identity (Somasundram & Monro, 2013). Greene and Robbins (2015) concluded that a pastoral calling for women clergy can equate to dire consequences regarding one's acceptance of difficulties and challenges with discrimination. Such judgment reduces the benefits of receiving from gifted leaders (Williams, 2014). Thus, Cohall and Cooper (2010) reported that women pastors remain underrepresented, and churches should be more open to female leadership in addition to creating opportunities for them. Thus, gender and institutional theories must be explored to clarify the impact of role perceptions and interpretive viewpoints on the topic of achieving and maintaining acceptance.

Acceptance

Williams (2014) found that churches traditionally define leaders by gender and marital status. Entering a “fundamentally gendered organization” (Greene & Robbins, 2015, p. 405), women began seeking ordination and recognition as pastors in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Perl, 2002; Somasundram & Monro, 2013; Sullins, 2000). Comprising slightly more than 50% of church population, this appears as paradox because women remain more active in their faith than men (Lowe, 2011). Lowe (2011) reported that one study appointing women pastors to fill pulpits in the absence of male priests produced increased rates in satisfaction, enhanced participation, and larger financial contributions from congregants. Lowe indicated that this became particularly prevalent when the female clergy incorporated collaborative leadership styles.

Lay person attitudes contribute to receptivity of women clergy based upon perceptions relating to women's suffrage, divorce reform, women in politics, Equal Rights legislation, and other changing roles of women in society (Stump, 1986). Stump (1986) stated that, despite improvements, areas in the northern part of the US appeared more open to the movement of women as opposed to the more conservative areas in the south. Church autonomy also impacts levels of acceptance despite denominational policy.

Tunheim and DuChene (2016) reported that ELCA women bishops experience unique journeys that rely heavily on spouse support. Women serving as pastors in congregations overcoming prejudice and accepting female clergy received favorable ratings of 91% relating to effectiveness (Bumgardner, 2015). Bumgardner (2015) added that those favorable markings rise during the woman's tenure. Women pastors also at times gain congregational favor by extending care to parishioners compared with the nurturing nature of their homes (Shehan et al., 1999). Shehan et al. (1999) defined this congregational mothering as "doing gender," which produces effective results in earning respect and proving themselves.

Theories and Role Belief Systems

Research has indicated that differing perspectives are formed regarding female and male leader behaviors even when they behave in the same manner (Katila & Eriksson, 2013). Katila and Eriksson (2013) discussed that this observation can be explained through management and gender theories. Katila and Eriksson found that descriptions of women typically include expressive, relational, and communal representations. Attitudes toward men and their roles include competent, agentic

mannerisms. While male and female leaders may possess traditional characteristics or traits more in line with that which has conventionally been assigned to a member of the opposite sex, leadership perceptions of subordinates are much deeper than theoretical directives.

Eagly and Karau (2002) communicated secular gender perceptions by defining Role Congruity Theory as two primary notions: perceptions of women in leadership roles appear less favorable than men in the same positions; and when a woman fulfills a prescribed role of a man, she receives minimum positive attitudes. Thus, according to theory, social systems typically distinguish women as communal with relational attributes and recognize men as agentically assertive with task-driven characteristics (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Eagly (2009) reported on descriptive and prescriptive role belief systems in which descriptive conveys stereotypical perceptions and prescriptive offers insight into admirable sex role distinctions based upon cultural context. Sullins (2000) affirmed that “male/female inequality among the clergy is a result of embedded cultural values which have not shown much change over time” (p. 259). When deviation occurs that threatens the norms, hostility transpires (Eagly, 2009), creating sexism and prejudice.

Traditionally, two primary theoretical views have developed in spiritual settings that explain role interpretation from a biblical perspective: complementary views (women remain under the authority of man and cannot preach or be pastors) and egalitarian views (men and women remain equal and can hold any office) (Colaner & Giles, 2008; Fung, 2015). Fung (2015) generated his own observation referred to as the interdependent view in which the husband is the leader of the family, but men and

women can fully participate in church leadership. Despite abundant theories and viewpoints, collectivistic entities never appear to fully exhaust the dilemma.

Perl (2002) noted that scholars spend great time in study and debate over the differing ministerial styles between male and female clergy. Perl deliberated that women seem more person-oriented preferring direct interaction with parishioners. In contrast, men focus on job status and administrative performance. Preference regarding positions, differences in familial responsibilities, size of organization, and other factors contribute to relational versus task-driven mentalities as opposed to findings that distinguish gender as a sole contributor to role disparities.

Wood and Eagly (2015) provided an explanation by identifying two research traditions related to gender theory: the classic personality approach differentiates communal (women) traits from agentic (male) characteristics and gender self-categorization approaches identify social norms for women and men that characterize their identities. Wood and Eagly asserted that gender identities provide ways for men and women to attach meaning to their culturally defined gendered aspects. Furthermore, relational and collective selves may be identified when affiliating with group dynamics and/or structures. Considering characteristics such as communal and agentic mannerisms, Perl's (2002) study examined the time each week that is spent on preparation and sermon delivery, worship planning, education or teaching, pastoral counseling, visitation, supervision, small group facilitation, church meeting attendance, denominational conferences, and committee service. Using a quantitative approach, eight mainline denominations were analyzed that included American Baptist, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran of America, Presbyterians,

Unitarian-Universalist, United Methodist, and the United Church of Christ. Findings conveyed that women spend less time on administration than men in a pastoral setting. Furthermore, women spend more time in one-on-one counseling with parishioners than men. Perl found that gender differences appeared small and barely worth noting, as both genders satisfy roles that remain significantly valued by congregants.

Foley, Hang-Yue, and Wong (2005) indicated that women pastors experience challenges separate from males based on “perceived gender discrimination, organizational justice and work-related attitudes” (p. 421). Using a variety of social theories and comparisons and gender role theory, the authors proposed that women react predominantly to gender discrimination as perceived. Conversely, men respond to perceptions related to workplace justice. Understanding these distinctions becomes quite significant for attracting and retaining personnel. Furthermore, the authors noted that ascribing roles and gender-related characteristics enhance one’s perception toward discrimination. When a sensed prejudice exists, members of that sex feel disadvantaged. Thus, social comparisons come into play that remain influenced by treatment, salary, and promotional possibilities. A lack of trust, increased resentment, and dissatisfaction begin to lurk on behalf of the victimized group. Foley et al. remarked that such discriminatory comprehensions lead to low organizational commitment and premature institutional departure.

Drawing upon institutional theory that supports the notion of organizational response to organizational change for self-preservation, Styhre (2014) explored successful implementation of women clergy into ministry. Despite addressing occasional gender issues and interests that male counterparts do not endure, these women experience

legitimate recognition and well-regarded respect. Considering institutional theoretical components, Styhre examined distributive and procedural justice in relation to women clergy. According to Styhre, distributive justice includes equal distribution among social components regarding privileged positions and procedural justice involves fair and identical selection practices for individuals aspiring to certain socially privileged positions. For the current study, distributive justice carried out over an extended period generates active acceptance of women pastors. Ideally, that same pattern leads to procedural justice regarding fair selection.

Leadership Styles

Some researchers and church congregants believe that men and women pastors represent differences in leadership styles, given stereotypical understandings of women as relational and men as specifically task oriented. Finlay (1996) also questioned whether women pastors finding placement in rural churches or other non-parish positions originate from different goals for ministry than men. Focusing on informalized situations, relational tendencies, egalitarian viewpoints, and social justice issues prompts this line of questioning. Furthermore, men tend to position themselves with power over a congregation compared with women's preferences toward democratic structures of decision making. Finlay explained the concept of male headship rivaled with feminine pursuits of empowerment for themselves and for others.

Fogarty (2009) explored whether gender differences create distinctions between transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles of leadership behavior. Fogarty defined transformational leadership as providing attention to charismatic and affective traits when guiding others in roles of authority. The author also spoke of intrinsic

motivation and follower development about transformational leadership styles. Transactional leadership refers to exchanges between leaders and their followers (Fogarty, 2009). Failing to exercise leadership, laissez-faire leadership styles were discussed as bipolar extremes that offer no concern for control, establish no direction, lack concern for task accomplishment, and show no interest for interpersonal relationships. Fogarty's study found no such differences in gender and leadership behavior among senior pastors.

Liu, Cutcher, and Grant (2015) addressed gendered construction of authentic leadership and its relationship to theories regarding the professional acceptance of women. This theoretical positioning emerges from perceived gender attitudes regarding leaders facing crisis within their organizations (Liu, Cutcher, & Grant, 2015). The concept appears relevant to acceptance for women pastors, as many serve in declining congregations on the verge of closing their doors in which trust building skills remain pertinent (Frame & Shehan, 2005). Liu et al. perceived authenticity in such crisis related to confidence, optimism, and resilience. Elements of self-awareness, ethicality, and morality play into the levels of discerned authenticity based on gender. Liu et al. found that "doing authenticity meant doing gender in line with stereotypes of what it means to be a man (independent, strong, active, and decisive) and a woman (nurturing, caring, outgoing, and communal)" (p. 249) within cultural context.

Cultural Impacts of Acceptance

Lehman (1987) claimed that "receptivity can be differentiated into at least three dimensions - perceptions, affect, and motivations to act" (p. 319). Although the dimensions vary significantly, Lehman indicated that churches overall appear more

accepting of women pastors versus rejection. Member attributes revolving around sexism, traditional perceptions, type of church/community, and cultural disposition determine degrees of acceptance or rejection. Furthermore, churches with no experience relating to female clergy react different than those that have had encounters with women pastors. Lehman communicated that churches with no familiarity relating to women pastors have preconceived stereotypes that must be addressed, and a lack of affirmative action-oriented policies within local religious institutions sway opinions of acceptance. Attitudes after having contact with female clergy help to diminish prejudice (Lehman, 1987). According to Albee (2000), a female student minister (Methodist) in Missouri served three rural churches. One congregation appeared elderly, small, and dying; the second was self-sufficient; and the third remained positioned for progression. Despite the distinctive group dynamics of each church, this pastor was confident that gender had no influence on her congregation's view of her.

In keeping with the former female's position regarding acceptance, Bammert (2010) noted accommodating affirmation regarding women as pastors in MPD. One pastor referred to her calling as a community effort, adding that lay people in her Presbyterian affiliation (prior to being a clergy) asked her when she was going to pursue a role as a minister. Bammert also recalled a pastor who noted that preaching gifts led to an encouraging push from church members in pursuing ordination.

Gender inequality seems partly based on cultural values of local congregations (Lee, 2004). Lyons (2013) reported that sharing pulpits, correcting misguided patriarchal hermeneutics, equipping seminarians for real-world challenges, working together, and incorporating mentoring can significantly improve acceptance rates for African American

female pastors. According to Lee (2004), studying such narratives, mechanisms, and public discourse offers insight into promoting women further along the path of ecclesiastical authority.

In Lee's (2004) study, an African American male's liberal preaching led to an appointment of a female African American in an assistant pastoral role that created quite a stir in a traditionally male oriented church body. The controversy led to a spiritual revolution for the church. In moving away from traditionalistic patterns, the church became receptive and open to conferring and actively supporting women clergy. The church previously had never experienced a woman in a teaching or preaching capacity. The exposure prompted positive change in perspectives and actions toward female pastors. Lee expressed that public discourse, mentoring, and ministerial activity constructed new ideologies for gender roles within this church institution. Lyons (2013) and Lee found that creating opportunities for females increases acceptance, enhances effectiveness, and produces a sense of normalcy for women pastors and lay members.

Dahlvig and Longman (2014) discussed a model and emerging theory that addresses environmental context and self-awareness as influencers regarding women's propensity toward leadership. According to the authors, validation and cultural resistance impact their leadership journeys. Dahlvig and Longman proposed that leadership motivators such as relational responsibility, mentoring, and calling lead to leadership self-efficacy, which enhances experience that prompts competence.

Social innovations and regional diversity heavily influence spatial diffusion regarding denominational attitudes affecting the acceptance of women pastors (Stump, 1986). Innovative adoption of women as ordained clergy remains influenced by

“external political and institutional pressures, by cultural boundaries and network connections within the denominational population, and by internal organizational characteristics” (Chaves, 1996, p. 840). Some organizations diffuse formal policies into their institutions, granting gender equality on a formal level (Chaves, 1996). Due to the sociological implications and interest in acceptance of women in pastoral roles, Chaves (1996) examined differences between early and late adopters regarding this organizational phenomenon. Exploring different angles, Chaves noted that distinctions between policy and trends exist in comparison to women seeking clergy status; denominations forbidding formal leadership of women benefit from significant performance of women involved in church activities; and denominations granting formal acceptance experience discrepancies on local levels from congregations failing to fully adopt the current policy regarding women in ministry. Despite pros and cons, active acceptance, and passive rejection, Chaves reported that the diffusion of women’s ordination serves as a new institution, symbolically marking a broader movement for equality in relation to women’s roles within the church and culturally. Many variables impact this shifting change agent. Chaves discussed that one potential consideration for a movement in women’s acceptance may be found due to a shortage of male clergy. Chaves also mentioned that individual congregational personalities and attitudes impact rates of adoption and acceptance. Ontological positions regarding sacraments and the holiness of male priesthood also influence adoption status regarding women as accepted pastoral personnel (Chaves, 1996).

A woman pastor serving in the ELCA denomination serves as a church planter and uses technology to reach those in her sphere of influence (Merritt, 2016). Merritt

(2016) noted that, in overcoming challenges, woman pastors must be culturally conditioned to function as master collaborators, to stress mutuality, and to actively listen. Church planters have an advantage in overcoming stigmas and cultural difficulties because they start with a blank slate that creates group norms (Merritt, 2016).

Other Influences of Acceptance

Kent (2008) interviewed a highly recognized female minister who believes in the inerrancy of Scripture, feels certain that females can be ordained into ministry (personally chooses not to), and strongly deems that women have a right to preach. Additionally, Kent reported that this extremely respected public personality does not embrace feminism but, rather, believes that the feminist movement has done a grievous disservice to women and society. According to the interview conducted by Kent, this person feels called to preach and teach, but it has nothing to do with gender. Despite the paradox between her approach and more liberal-minded moderates, she has experienced great success in her position (Kent, 2008). Birthed into a pastoral home, the respected authority of her father appears to be relative to some arguments surrounding her success yet, despite curiosities over her family name, her giftedness prevails over her upbringing in relation to her achievements. Regardless of her accomplishments, no one has ever challenged her preaching role over educational credentials, only her gender.

Setting up a motion of paradox that presents itself in telling and retelling stories of women pastors prepares an openness in moving forward toward complete acceptance for female clergy in breaking down hegemonic tendencies regarding pastoral roles (Bammert, 2010). As paradox breeds contrast, comparison, and contradiction, defeating homogenic influences requires education and one's ability to traverse through diversity in

avoiding tedious continuation in a male-dominated profession that prevails in provoking nostalgic desires (Bammert, 2010). Furthermore, when prosocial behaviors seem present, individuals feel confident and comforted (Eagly, 2009). Jablonski (1988) noted that rhetoric presented by patriarchal idealist pursues traditionally known roles for women designed to appeal to one's conscience and convictions. Relying on the concept that patriarchal units cannot conceivably excommunicate all women for pursuing counter-culture norms, Jablonski reported that both the church and the women's movement would "depend on paradox-maintaining rhetoric to keep their goals for one another within the realm of possibility" (1988, p. 180). Mentoring adds to that probability.

Mentoring

Literature has supported the notion that men and women seem open to the concept of mentoring as a professional development tool. Mentoring can occur through a variety of ways: informally, formally, group settings, online, etc. Despite significant improvement over the last several years, church leadership repeatedly fails to identify and to develop emerging leaders (Ngomane & Mahlangu, 2014). Ngomane and Mahlangu (2014) discussed that churches or organizations that establish well-designed mentoring programs produce solidified talent yielding strong retention rates and career satisfaction. Additionally, Ngomane and Mahlangu addressed two types of mentoring: structural (which emphasizes power within legitimate roles) and relational (which develops interpersonal skills). Furthermore, Selzer (2008) found helpful and positive effects of mentoring on individuals pursuing theological education prior to entering full-time ministry. According to Selzer's research, 81% agreed that formal mentor models prove beneficial in their ministerial practices. Many literary sources contribute to an

understanding in relation to the challenges faced by women pastors and the benefits of incorporating mentoring into their proficiencies.

Empirically reviewed articles, theories, testimonies, and education only scratch the surface into this phenomenon. Additionally, researchers can elaborate and can assume a variety of positions in discussing the obstacles women pastors face and applicable mentoring acknowledgments. Greene and Robbins (2015) elaborated on challenges in ministry for women entering a male-dominated profession laden with discriminatory treatment. Morton (2016) discussed the value of growing up under the leadership of two women pastors who believed in the value of mentoring. Murrill's (2015) article explored the importance of mentoring women for church leadership. Finally, Newkirk and Cooper (2013) studied and compared the experiences of women pastors who had been mentored versus those who had not. Considering the vast perspectives on the topic from varying authors, a common consensus among all participants, whether through interviews, observations, or documentation, has supported the notion that women in ministry face difficulties unknown to men and that mentoring can be a tool to improve readiness.

Mentoring Defined

Using generalized discussion, Dong, Jun, Ho, and Yina (2009) agreed with Collins (1994) that mentoring includes an interpersonal relationship between an individual with experience and one pursuing understanding or knowledge. Young and Wright (2001) defined mentoring as an integrated approach that incorporates “advising, coaching, and nurturing, focused on creating a viable relationship to enhance individual career/personal professional growth and development” (p. 203). Those receiving

mentoring may be called mentees or protégés (Dong et al., 2009). Mentoring remains highly important because it may enhance job performance, increase income, and prep candidates for promotion (Dong et al., 2009). Despite notoriety, Dong et al. found gaps regarding the impact of mentoring: studies must be conducted to discern the relationship of theoretical mechanisms that generate information on the benefits of mentoring, current research documentation highlights only social exchanges but ignores risks associated with contextual factors, investigations pursuing the effects of mentoring focus only on research design, and literature has not fully explored the impact of mentoring on non-western cultures. The authors conveyed that their study demonstrated enhanced role performance in jobs and increased social status. Theoretically, they found that mentoring improves personal learning, can create social status associations, and highlights team roles. Practical implications for mentoring include cohesion, encouragement, and strengthened work relationships that produce effectiveness (Dong et al., 2009).

Gong and Chen (2011) broadly defined mentoring as an active role fulfilled by “an experienced individual within an organization who has attained a certain rank or achievement and who can provide career development support to less experienced individuals in that organization” (p. 807). Titling the less experienced individuals as protégés, the authors affirmed research that has supported improved career outcomes based on formal mentoring systems. The authors communicated that steady change agents such as altered contracts between employers and employees, consistently evolving technologies that impact the workplace, restructuring of organizational frameworks, and increasingly diverse environments provide a canvas for constant development that occurs from mentoring relationships. Gong and Chen added that developmental network

theories emphasize the possibility of multi-layered mentoring systems simultaneously evolving. Resources used by the authors have established that 70% of workplace learning occurs from informal communication systems. Thus, mentoring seems reasonable and generalizable for increased productivity, enhanced professional success, job promotions, and larger pay rates for protégés (Gong & Chen, 2011).

Women Pastors Desire to be Mentored

Pranoto and Durso (2016) discussed in their article that six young pastors shared a positive system of support that resulted from mentoring, coaching, encouragement, and references. Seminary professors, previous pastors, and other spiritual directors received credit for assisting the ladies in searching and securing a pastoral call (Pranoto & Durso, 2016). One woman yearned for a female ministry mentor after discerning “her call to preach in her forties” (Lyons, 2013, p. 84). Receiving her ordination from the ABC-USA denomination, she felt her biggest obstacle in this new role included the lack of role models for women ministers which prohibited networking opportunities.

Another struggling minister was raised to believe that God does not call women to serve in the pulpit (Lyons, 2013). Thus, Lyons (2013) reported that she deeply grieved a lack of support that would have been satisfied through mentoring guidance. Docampo (2013) noted that mentoring aided Latina Baptist women by contributing to their self-esteem, enhancing support, and training that heightened leadership skills as they prepared to shepherd their congregations. Collective cultural characteristics may have contributed to this outcome.

A survey conducted by LinkedIn of 1,000 female professionals revealed that 19%, or one in five women, never had a mentor (Jasper, 2011). As noted in that study, 52%

never encountered an individual who was suited for the role or one who was a good fit. Nonetheless, Jasper (2011) went on to report that 67% never mentored another professional because they were never asked. Furthermore, Jasper informed her readers that the survey found that women benefit from these networking treasures through professional guidance, recommendations, career advancement, and collaboration. Goman (2010) wrote that organizations should groom women for leadership by “offering coaching, mentoring, and career opportunities” (p. 11).

Murrill (2015) remarked that “one of the key issues faced by women in the church is the lack of provision for ongoing leadership development” (p. 16). Murrill discoursed that mentoring can assist in this form of professional training. If necessary, cultures and practices must establish a form of restructuring to provide this resourceful tool, learn exemplar methodologies for employing mentoring behaviors, and clear the way for women to move into leadership roles such as pastoring (Murrill, 2015). Murrill suggested that everyone can assist this process by embracing cross-gender mentoring, setting clear expectations for mentoring relationships, and practicing mentorship by doing life together. The author’s advice for women included validation, pursuit, acknowledgment of calling, finding the right mentor/mentee relationship, exercising a caring attitude toward both genders, and acknowledging help as received. According to Murrill, men can help by mentoring alongside women, postulating intentional and vocal advocacy for women, stepping aside to present women with opportunities, and suspending sexist jokes or communication that devalue women. Murrill also gave suggestions for churches in providing an atmosphere for mentoring and promoting the concept of female clergy holding positions within a congregational setting: offer positive

discrimination in hiring, challenge traditional role expectations, and take risks that create opportunities for women.

Schlegel (2000) stated that women desire female mentors, such relationships empower and mobilize energies and resources for both parties, and mentoring enhances professional success in non-traditional career environments such as church ministry. In a study conducted by Johns and Watson (2006), the need for mentoring emerged regardless whether it occurred from one of the same sex or from an opposite gender. Leadership development was enhanced for those who had benefited from mentoring. Taherian and Shekarchian (2008) outlined that mentoring relationships should incorporate constructive and nonjudgmental feedback and should provide positive and facilitative development, mutual trust and respect, and emphasis on components for change. The examination conducted by Johns and Watson indicated that those receiving mentoring felt empowerment and encouragement, elevated commitment spiritually, and authentic understanding.

Morton (2016) communicated a positive story of a little girl who grew up under the inspiring leadership of two women pastors who mentored those in their realm of care. Privileged with a plethora of encouragement, the young girl found herself surrounded by those developing her for teaching and preaching, which led to a pursuit in ministry as well. This rare freedom also created challenges, in that male leaders lacking security and identity in their own calling felt intimidated by the young girl's leadership gifts. Morton added that this opposition challenged her calling and prompted her removal from ministry situations. This story included positive exchanges with men secure in their roles who provided encouragement and mentoring as well. Wiele (2015) supported this position as

a male pastor, stating that a change of culture within local congregations must begin to embrace the phenomenon of women as pastors to powerfully affect the larger church. Not acting alone in gendered distinction, women likewise create strife and practice jealousy, judgment, and condemnation (Morton, 2016). Concluding her narrative, Morton reminded readers that clerical leadership should remain mindful of young girls and boys sitting in the pews waiting for mentoring and shaping as they enter their own called journeys.

Mentoring Boundaries

Prior to female clergy considering a committed mentoring relationship as a mentor or mentee, boundaries should be defined. Feinberg (n.d.) suggested that, in considering mentoring connections, one should have a clear understanding of their definition and expectation regarding mentoring; check whether it remains an adequate association; share common values; consider the way in which that person walks in their personal journey (character, ethics); savor candidness; develop thick skin concerning feedback; make adjustments in expectations if necessary; and exercise discernment throughout the process. Bertagnoli (2011) discussed the importance of mentoring as assisting with new skill development and having someone to bounce ideas off. Laff (2007) noted that women suffer from a shortage of mentors and informal networks in achieving senior leadership positions. Nevertheless, organizations appear primed for an emerging of more formal and informal networks. Progressive professionals hope that this trend will bridge the gap for women pursuing senior level careers and will bring forth a more equal representation (Laff, 2007).

Mentees must trust and respect the mentor, take initiative in demonstrating resourcefulness, develop plans and pursue goals, listen, and apply constructive feedback (Young & Wright, 2001). In establishing a mentor/mentee relationship, Young and Wright (2001) stated that the protégé must assess and determine needed outcomes from the relationship, identification and solicitation of a mentor, and set boundaries for establishing a successful connection. Tangenberg (2013) indicated that gender sensitive mentoring may be important relative to professional and personal priorities in preventing contradictory messages that create role confusion. Mentoring women pursuing careers is particularly intricate, as intersections of faith and gender create controversy and varying viewpoints. Tangenberg ascertained that most ministerial mentoring relationships occur naturally from networking opportunities and other communicative forms of engagement. Tangenberg also noted that same gender mentoring and mixed gender mentoring have advantages and disadvantages for female clergy. Self-awareness and reflection can assist in determining a best-fit for an individual. In educational environments preparing women for mentoring, several themes exist: self-disclosures from mentors regarding professional experience and life-balance models helped women understand personal journeys of those who have laid foundational paths before them; consideration regarding power issues must ensue due to the potential for cultural diversity and inequality; and social change efforts may impact one's education regarding body image, domestic inequalities and violence, and political efforts directed toward human rights issues (Tangenberg, 2013).

Mentoring Remains Essential for Church Leadership

Newkirk and Cooper (2013) proposed that mentoring remains essential in cultivating effective church leadership, bridging gaps, and “navigating challenges and

obstacles in ministry” (p. 340). Thus, it reduces the burden and provides a foundation for generating new belief systems (Murrill, 2015). This appears critical, as pastors care for a plethora of people. As caregivers, they do not always realize a need for self-care, which can drain energy that creates depletion and vulnerabilities leading to misconduct. Role identity theory provides a lens of understanding regarding this pastoral challenge (Pooler, 2011). Ideally, pastors learn to recognize their personal problems and seek help from outside sources (Pooler, 2011) such as mentors, peers, and other interested parties.

Pooler (2011) noted that role identity theory stems from social psychology disciplines and explains the way in which individuals generate meaning from their roles and distinctiveness. Additionally, people develop this self-concept predominantly through their career roles. Pooler went on to explain that pastors are at risk when they elevate themselves above their congregations. Through further elaboration, Pooler indicated that pastors not only increase risk when they assume prideful mannerisms, but when they realize the difficulty of their specific situations, they reject the notion of asking for help. Developing hobbies and roles outside of work may be helpful. While some think men may suffer predominantly from the destructive ramifications identified by this theory, it appears reasonable to note that women fall prey to this system as well. The situations may vary, but all pastors remain at risk.

Despite the healthy implications for partaking in religious activities, clergy particularly suffer psychological distress and negative physical wellbeing from religious oppressions, and the impact may not be known to congregants (Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2013). According to Miles and Proeschold-Bell (2013), unrelenting demands placed upon them by parishioners in need, sermon preparation, and other career-related time

drains appear to instigate this suffrage. Pastors wear many hats; these multiple roles can create conflict, role strain, exhaustion, stress, and burnout. Fatigue from the demands can result in physical and mental complications, including strong tendencies toward depression enhanced by loneliness and isolation (Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2013).

Miles and Proeschold-Bell (2013) noted that peer groups can aid in reducing the strain. Women participating in the peer groups conveyed that the support assisted them in overcoming challenges with feelings of isolation. Some may consider this peer system quite important to their roles in a career field that may already experience challenges related to gender acceptance. This form of mentoring appears to be growing in popularity as younger clergy seem more apt to embrace self-care.

The health and wellbeing of female clergy remains essential in discussing challenges that must be overcome in the pursuit of acceptance and the manner with which mentoring can assist that development. According to LeGrand et al. (2013), women pastors feel guilty for taking personal time, experience pressure in the need to prove themselves, report financial strains, endure child-related stress from mothering needs to balance home and work life, and truly desire healthy lifestyles that involve exercise and nutrition when possible. Four factors contribute to female clergy health: intrapersonal, interpersonal, congregational, and institutional. LeGrand et al. found that intrapersonally women pastors seem less likely to protect their personal time and prioritize caregiving needs between the church they lead and their familial responsibilities. Judgmental fears and concerns over compromised confidentiality impact interpersonal influences relating to their health and wellbeing. Congregationally, the health of female clergy seems marred by reduced respect from congregants based on gender and parish

member confrontations, indicating that women should not be pastors. The authors found that, institutionally, the UMC listened to and followed through on congregant inclinations preferring male pastors over females. Due to the challenges faced by female clergy regarding gender discrimination, women pastors felt vulnerable and expressed concern over a lack of safe venues in which to confide emotional duress; this intensifies mental strain and provokes feelings of isolation and loneliness leading to depression. A woman pastor serving in a UCC congregation noted that the greatest obstacle for her as a pastor was her journey with cancer because it forced a reduction in her clerical hours from 65-70 hours per week to approximately 45-50 hours to fit her treatment plan (Gellatly, 2004). Gellatly (2004) reported that the struggle results from being unable to fully perform in a profession that she loves. Active mentoring systems can reduce this strain and can provide an encouraging outlet.

Other Mentoring Resources

Beginning with a calling, women pastors pursue ministerial positioning (Bumgardner, 2015). According to Bumgardner (2015), women clergy lacking mentors learn by observation of those they respect, such as family members and teachers. As was the case with Bumgardner's male pastor, some women received informal clerical training from the leaders of their churches. Bumgardner also listed mentoring sources such as books, speakers at seminars, women leaders in other fields, tapes, and films. Bumgardner discussed issues for women pastors raising young children, distresses over gender differences, and cultural impacts that determine acceptance rates. Mentoring offers a wide variety of resources and options for assisting women pastors through challenges and acceptance in MPD. The mentoring choices listed in this study provide

only a basic overview. An in-depth explanation of all mentoring possibilities is beyond the scope of this research.

Utilizing a literature review, this chapter communicated challenges faced by women pastors in MPD leading to acceptance and the function of mentoring. Many variables contribute to pastoral obstacles, including culture, familial responsibility, and organizational dynamics. Equally, acceptance rates stem from endless factors that encompass various theories, congregational norms, and leadership skills. As presented, denominational implementation of mentoring models for pastors has become more prevalent. Examining challenges, acceptance, and mentoring as a combined unit provides the framework for this study. Chapter III addresses the methodological structures for this research.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Rationale and Assumptions for Qualitative Design

The purpose of this study was to identify challenges women face in achieving acceptance as pastors in MPD. Additionally, it is pertinent to discern the benefits and/or disadvantages realized when utilizing mentoring components to prepare for clerical service. The specific methodological assumptions for this study are located in the methods section. Ontologically (nature of reality) (Creswell, 2013), women in ministry face unique obstacles and challenges compared to men. One may consider the collectivistic impact regarding this recognized occurrence, or a person may consider individualistic influences as defined by culture, demographics, and unique encounters. This study included a collectivistic viewpoint and incorporated individual distinctions.

As mentoring can play a positive role in retention and preparation for women pastors in MPD, this examination included a collectivistic perception on the power of mentoring and individual proficiencies in being a mentor and/or receiving guidance as a mentee. Epistemologically (knowledge) (Creswell, 2013), this examiner maintained a close distance between the content and the researched. Such intimate spacing in comprehension lingers from previous ministerial experiences that provide familiarity and understanding regarding the audience and participants. Furthermore, the researcher previewed documentation that deliberated challenges experienced by women ministers in MPD and the role of mentoring in their success. Policy also influences the power of knowledge in this profession, as many denominations do not embrace, endorse, or accept female pastors. Additionally, as alluded to in the literature review, denominations accepting and designing policy in favor of women pastors do not necessarily translate to

the local church level. Most churches preserve a right to autonomy; thus, culturally not all local churches favor women as pastors, even though the denomination approved them. Futuristically, this inquirer envisions more active involvement in ministry as a recognized leader. Considering this reality, it is imperative to exemplify a clear conception of the challenges experienced by women ministers in MPD and to intensively explore the impact of mentoring in this field to demonstrate significance regarding its evaluation.

As mentioned earlier in epistemological positioning, this investigator's axiological (values in research) (Creswell, 2013) assumptions encompass elements of subjectivity. Moreover, value systems were addressed in the literature review component regarding correct and incorrect perceptions of allowing women in senior pastoral leadership, which included complementarian, egalitarian, and interdependent stances (Colaner & Giles, 2008; Fung, 2015). This system is appropriate in understanding individual perceptions regarding assumed gender roles within MPD.

The interpretive framework for this project incorporated social constructivism due to participants' views of their situation and the historical and cultural norms that create difficulties for women in ministry (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, an intrinsic case study approach was utilized to capture notable descriptions concerning the conflict that women pastors in MPD endure in their bounded systems. This exploratory case study utilized several sources of information to analyze ministerial challenges and mentoring outcomes for personal and professional development, including semi-structured interviews with female pastors in MPD, interviews of other significant contributors, observation, available media, historical documentation, theory, culture, and paradoxes of mythology.

Although the sources of data may appear overwhelming and exhausting, the engagement triangulates and expends resources for comprehensive examination.

Type of Design

Qualitative research was chosen as the design for this study to deeply explore the issues and challenges regarding acceptance of women pastors in MPD and the benefits of mentoring (Kruth, 2015). As pastors have a variety of fascinating experiences and their narratives are so entrenched in rich descriptiveness, this researcher desired to take the study beyond the capabilities of a numerical inquiry. The sample size was small but produced an abundance of data. Although data elements exist from an assortment of resources, to the author's knowledge no specific theory addresses this topic (Kruth, 2015). Nonetheless, several available theories offer some insight into the phenomenon.

Using qualitative research, the author strived to maintain objectivity as much as possible and to limit bias. However, as noted by Kruth (2015), it is impossible to fully eliminate prior dispositions when qualitative studies by nature include subjectivity that captures subjects and wonderment within natural environments. This researcher attempted to maintain the integrity of the study by upholding a nonjudgmental stance. The examiner also designed questions and received input from semi-structured interviews that eliminated the need for the researcher's input. Additionally, the author does not and has never maintained membership within mainline cultures; therefore, the information is new and informative in nature. Furthermore, suiting behavioral and social science purposes in understanding human mannerisms, this qualitative study endeavored to explore rich, thick descriptions of the challenges women pastors in MPD face related to

acceptance and the mentoring experiences incurred on their individual and professional journeys (Ingham-Broomfield, 2015).

Specifically, the designed qualitative case study approach included empirical exploration to investigate phenomenon surrounding the contemporary complexities that women pastors face related to acceptance in MPD and the mentoring encounters that aid their progression within bounded systems (Yin, 2014). Additionally, according to Stake (1995), the bounded system is “intricately wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal contexts” (p. 17). Kruth (2015) noted that the “case may be an individual, an event, or a series of events” (p. 224). This case study style included multiple perspectives and sources of inquiry comprising interviews, observations, and documents generated from in-depth understanding regarding the topic (Kruth, 2015). Furthermore, as Kruth indicated, the case study tactics produced recognizable themes that will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. It appeared to function appropriately in providing an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by women clergy in MPD. It also assisted in clarifying the positive effects encountered by professionals in ministry if they are fortunate to receive guidance as a mentee and pay it forward by offering mentoring services to others. Design enhancers included interviews, observation, available media, documentation exploration, and other opportunities. The observation and documentation elements encompassed predominantly natural settings and commentary that supported the interview components. Interviews specifically explored the two prominent research questions:

1. What challenges did women pastors face related to acceptance in MPD?

2. What mentoring models were used in the professional development of women pastors in MPD?

Researcher's Role

First, the researcher secured permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study (Appendix A). Each interview incorporated a background questionnaire (Appendix B) and semi-structured questioning for data collection. Serving as the primary collection tool, the examiner gathered information and materials for analysis (Kruth, 2015). Interview questions were divided into 10 items (five related to potential challenges faced relating to acceptance and five involving mentoring models) (Appendix C). Thus, the first five covered history, background, and testimonies from each interviewee. Also, the researcher inquired regarding specific confrontations, educational preparedness, present-day obstacles, and feelings about their personal situations compared with their peers. In comparing notes with Bammert (2010) and in keeping with the investigator's first question, the opening item explored in each interview was the calling. Thus, this author's initial question asked interviewees about situations in their lives that led them to ministry.

Comparatively, Bammert (2010) questioned the way in which one came to their current position, which led to discussion that addressed their pastoral journey. Observably, this line of reasoning and inquiry supported this examiner's thought processes for generating applicable data. Mentoring queries addressed whether the interviewees received mentoring in their preparation for ministry, the value of mentoring, gender guidance, the mentoring models used in preparing others for pastoral roles, and organizational models within their denominational settings. Some entities and

individuals do not implement or experience all of these aspects. Thus, the researcher chose to ask whether the question applied as opposed to making assumptions; i.e., not all subjects experienced mentoring and/or mentoring models or endorsed gender guidance parameters. All questions were open-ended and provided opportunities for the interviewees to reflect and to expound upon their experiences. The interview session was semi-structured allowing for natural progression.

Site and Sample Selections

This study gathered two different sets of data. The first involved collections from women pastors in MPD. One pastor from each of the seven denominations was interviewed: UMC, ELCA, PC-USA, Episcopal, ABC-USA, UCC, and DOC. Some received mentoring formally or informally and some did not, some mentored others and some did not, and some continue to groom current or future church leaders. Some will become denominational mentors as they progress in their careers.

DOC

Of the women pastors serving in MPD, the first pastors a DOC congregation but comes from a UMC background. Her career within the UMC keeps her active in a residential setting as part of a mission experience. Additionally, both her parents pastor; her father serves as an Episcopal priest.

ABC-USA

The ABC-USA pastor serves a reasonable size congregation in an affluent community. She also recalled experience with inner-city mission work, disaster relief, and Habitat for Humanity. Receiving her start in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)/Alliance of Baptist, she recently became a part of the ABC-USA organization.

UCC

The UCC pastor serves an older congregation sandwiched between a major university and a financially established neighborhood. She strives to balance the differences between the college students and the wealthy. However, her congregants appear to believe they serve predominantly a homeless community. The dynamics in her church remain quite fascinating. She began in the Episcopal church and advanced through the congregational system as a “pipe-liner,” meaning she went straight to undergraduate work from high school, followed by seminary. Finding challenge in receiving ordination, she transitioned to the UCC denomination.

Episcopal

The Episcopal minister recently retired. She continues to pastor in an interim capacity and provides pulpit supply. She was one of the first 20 women ordained within the Episcopal denomination; however, she grew up with a UMC background.

PC-USA

The PC-USA pastor grew up in Presbyterian congregations. While attending the General Assembly as a youth, she gained an eye-opening understanding of the magnitude of her denomination. That experience initiated her desire to explore a potential career as a pastor. Serving in her first official pastorate, she leads an older but stabilized parish.

ELCA

The ELCA pastor serves in a church in a small to mid-size congregation in a heavily populated community. She is an eighth generation (not all Lutheran) mainline pastor who can date her heritage back to the Reformation. Her mother was raised in UMC tradition; her father served as a Navy chaplain.

UMC

The UMC pastor serves a smaller congregation in the area. She plans to receive official ordination in the next few months and was raised under Methodist influence.

Wild Card Data

The second set of data, referred to as wild cards, included men, women pastors of diversity, two professors, and two church lay leaders with connection to the study. The first male contributor serves as a senior pastor of a large MPD church in the researcher's area of residence. He grew up a Methodist and married a UMC female clergy. Each pastors a congregation but finds creative ways to support one another's professional calling. The second male participant provides leadership as a Bishop in the surrounding Diocese. He grew up as an Episcopalian and followed a "pipe-line" approach to ministry. He attended a DOC college as an undergraduate student and went to seminary. One of his daughters currently serves as a Priest-in-Charge of a Congregation in Northern Virginia.

One African American woman pastor from the wild card group served in radio ministry in the early part of her ministerial calling and planted a church. Her uncle was a Methodist pastor. Another female pastor in the group comes from a Hispanic background and leads a church on an Army installation.

The first woman professor interviewed teaches preaching at a local seminary and has written articles on the subject, one of which this researcher utilized as a reference. Her early background includes Methodism prior to her family becoming Baptist in a conservative entity. Experiencing limitation, this contributor and her husband transitioned into a Moderate Baptist belief system. Additionally, both have served in

congregant leadership. She attended a Presbyterian seminary. The second woman professor was the first African American minister ordained in the Presbyterian community. She was born in North Carolina and is a sixth-generation African American Presbyterian. For the first 24 years of her life, she thought Presbyterians were part of a black denomination due to racial segregation. She has written and published many resources.

The first lay leader, an African American woman, has served in a multitude of ministries including preaching, teaching, and evangelizing. Additionally, she has a wide variety of experience within several denominations and has explored an assortment of religious institutions in fulfilling her call. Many of the denominations to which she has been introduced came from convenient resources based upon military requirements. As a child she was raised Catholic. The second lay leader from Asian American descent serves extensively as a volunteer in ministry and has significant insight into the benefits of mentoring.

Purposeful Sampling

With a variety of age groups, diverse ethnic backgrounds, and differing experiences, this researcher strived to saturate data as much as possible. The sampling was purposeful in soliciting sources, and the subjects were carefully chosen. The examiner first aspired to connect with the national components of each of the seven MPD in seeking suggestions for interviewees. This was completed by an online search of women pastors serving in the investigator's local area. Pulling from website sources that provide basic church information, the first few interview selectees were secured by cold calling. For possible participants who did not maintain regular office hours, the

investigator left messages for a return call back, sought email addresses from church websites, or searched for other avenues of contact. The interviewer sent out a minimum number of emails to secure interviewees. Once internet research and cold calling were exhausted, the researcher utilized word of mouth. Local resources were consulted at varying venues for possible points of contact. One military chaplain's spouse provided the researcher with contacts for some of the wild card participants. The researcher also utilized individuals from a local military organization to solicit contributors. The final effort for securing participants came to fruition as the interviewer contacted two regional offices within mainline protestant communities. The first endeavor was contact with the UMC office to possibly interview their District Superintendent. Having a full schedule, the UMC leadership deferred the researcher to a pastor with a large congregation in the local region. Secondly, the examiner contacted the regional Diocese and secured an interview with one of the Bishops. Everyone who was contacted communicated interest in the study and most conveyed a willingness to help. The few who declined did so because their calendars were full for the time frame of the study. One male pastor declined to participate, as his organization, a mainline, does not recognize women pastors and forbids the ordination of female clergy.

The investigator petitioned women pastors from MPD in the region of residence; wild card contributors were sought in the same local area. The northernmost participants serve in Richmond, Virginia. The easternmost participant resides in Williamsburg, Virginia and the southernmost contributor works predominantly in Jarratt, Virginia. Other interviewees live or work in Midlothian, Petersburg, Chesterfield, Fort Lee, Dinwiddie, and Colonial Heights, Virginia. The interviewer was fascinated that the two

male contributors had ties to Kentucky, the investigator's home of record. The Bishop served the Diocese of Kentucky for several years, and the male UMC pastor received his undergraduate degree from Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky.

The researcher initially desired to interview individuals with unique experiences from a variety of backgrounds who were ethnically diverse, encompassed wide age ranges, and provided other interesting distinctions. Sample selections satisfied those objectives. Moreover, with many variables and situational distinctions, this study benefited from acquired data that covered a variety of challenges, elements of acceptance, and an array of mentoring exchanges.

This study included information gathered from 15 purposely sampled individuals who provided a well-rounded perspective into the intentions of the proposed research. The study included 13 females and two males: two ranged in age from 20 to 29; four encompassed the 30s age category; three were between the ages of 40 to 49; two were in their 50s; three were between the ages of 60 and 69; and one was over 70. The investigation included 10 Caucasians, one Hispanic (Puerto Rican), two specifically African American, one with African American and Native American ethnicity, and one who self-identified as other, although she noted some Asian American heritage. Eight participants were married, two separated, one divorced, three single, and one widowed. Five candidates reported a ministerial license, and 11 obtained ordination several years ago. One expects to receive ordination this year, and the others left the question unanswered or wrote N/A for non-applicability.

Of the 11 ordained contributors, three received ordination in the early 1970s as women were beginning to receive formal recognition from some of the MPD in

becoming pastors. Of the 15 contributors, one was pregnant and provided insight into the young mother perspectives of challenges and acceptance. She reported that her congregation is open to the balance she plans to demonstrate between her work life at church and her home life as a new mom. They have congenially worked with her on a maternity leave plan.

Denominationally, one identified as DOC, two as ABC-USA members, one as UCC, two acknowledged as Episcopalian, two serve in the PC-USA organization, one ELCA pastor, two UMC participants, and four as other. Most affirmed that they lead weddings, preside over funerals, preach, teach, participate in speaking engagements, attend or serve at conferences, and work with retreats. Eight participate in administering sacraments such as baptism and Holy Communion or Eucharist. Most provide visitation at hospitals, to shut-ins such as homebound or nursing home establishments, and participate in jail ministry at some point. In keeping with the concept that ministerial persons and pastors must wear many hats, many of the contributors listed items such as building maintenance, teaching, denominational leadership, outreach, personnel supervisor, operations, and other activities as required in fulfilling their calling and personal giftedness. Professionally, nine serve in active pastoral roles, one recently retired, two provide interim or supply options, three are bi-vocational in that they have secondary income to offset the limited pay provided by their congregations, and two serve as professors in local seminaries.

Data Collection Techniques

Multiple forms of data collection were incorporated into the analysis for this study. Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions, observations, field notes,

media, policies, and other historical documentation provided points of interest for exploration. The investigator also pursued various websites, YouTube videos, and other resources in achieving data saturation as opportunities emerged. Interview scheduling consisted of hour-long intervals; some went slightly beyond the time frame due to the interviewees' desire to provide a thorough report for the researcher. Some were under the margin due to time constraints; however, most averaged an hour.

The interviewer desired interview sites that maintained minimal noise and distractions. Almost all interviews fell in line with that objective. Many were conducted in church offices, chapel classrooms, places of employment, and a few in individual homes. One interview was conducted at the local Diocese, and a couple were administered in public areas at the request of the participants. The public interviews maintained minimal commotion and racket, despite having a variety of patrons. Each site was at the discretion of the participant to provide comfort and convenience in exchange for their time. The examiner incorporated the utmost care in protecting the confidentiality of participants. All interviewees allowed the interviewer to utilize an audio recording device, which assisted in protecting recall. It also provided a historical archive of data for the study.

The researcher enlisted the help of a volunteer to complete all transcription requirements. The volunteer and examiner took turns transcribing, as it was a tedious and long process consuming a plethora of hours. Although a volunteer assisted, the identity of each contributor was sealed and protected to maintain the confidentiality component and to ensure the integrity of the study. Participants were given a number for identification purposes ranging from 1-15. The volunteer transcriber used the provided

identification number in separating each transcription, and the researcher utilized the transcriptions in identifying themes and codes for analysis of the data.

The examiner used traditional measures to perform qualitative analysis for this study by beginning with a list of commonalities between all subjects in relation to challenges, acceptance, and mentoring. Using an open coding process of organizing and summarizing data, the investigator began with headings to include events; calling; Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE); field education; formal protocols that included licensing and ordination; institutional degrees (accredited and non-accredited); types of mentoring (informal, formal, peer, online, conference calling, etc.); church decline and closing; family-work life balance; job security; glass ceiling effects; power issues; denominational transition; skills; open to new things; leadership styles; legalistic religion; supportive/non-supportive family members; etc.

To further narrow the broad spectrum of information, the coder grouped various elements into axial coding paradigms. The following categories surfaced: journey, education, mentoring, challenges, acceptance, jobs, leadership competencies, cultural, and comparisons (Tunheim & DuChene, 2016). Tunheim and DuChene (2016) provided the framework for journey, mentors, and challenges faced. Finally, the researcher chose four minimum codes to deliver findings regarding challenges overcome by women pastors in MPD in receiving acceptance and the impact of mentoring for this leadership dynamic: journey, mentoring, challenges, and acceptance. The examiner noticed that education appeared to fall within one's journey as interviewees discussed their path to ministry. Leadership competencies could be included in challenges or acceptance, as well as jobs, cultural, and comparisons. Additionally, the examiner did not observe any

specific mentoring patterns that may have modeled a thematic directive for pastors. Standard models prevailed, such as informal and formal elements, with most preferring informal relationship, trust building objectives. Additionally, many denominations have begun using their own formal systems of mentoring for new pastors.

Managing and Recording Data

Data were collected primarily through interviews but also included entries from other gathered documents, web-based sites, field notes, and observations. The interviewer secured collected data according to Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies. Additionally, according to IRB mandates, collected data do not contain any identifiable information. Furthermore, data are exclusively accessible to the researcher and will remain secured in a password protected file for three years. At the end of that time the collection will be deleted. In keeping with confidentiality, collective summation was incorporated to report findings. Once findings have been submitted and approved within the doctoral program and the graduate school at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky, the researcher has agreed to provide each participant with an emailed or mailed copy. Most interviewees were satisfied with an emailed version; one or two preferred a hard copy versus an electronic version.

Data Analysis Procedures

The author received permission from the IRB to conduct the study. As harm to human subjects was minimal to non-existent, the IRB expedited approval. IRB permission and procedural standards were formally utilized in this study because the researcher hopes to publish or publicly present the data or findings. Interviews were conducted only after the interviewee was notified in writing regarding rights to

confidentiality and/or anonymity. Additionally, interviewees were informed of their freedom in choosing to participate and in deciding whether to complete the process or to remove themselves from the study at any time without penalty. Interviewees signed a consent form in agreement to research conditions. Furthermore, participants initialed a statement on the informed consent form that allowed for audio device chronicling.

This chapter encompassed the research methodologies for this project, including rationale and assumptions, design, researcher's role, site and sample selections, data collection techniques such as recording and managing data, and data analysis procedures. The author deliberated extensively and intentionally incorporated the qualitative, case study approach to capture all-encompassing information related to women pastors in MPD overcoming challenges in the pursuit of acceptance while investing in mentoring tools. Chapter IV delivers findings as observed from the analyses of data.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This chapter begins with a discussion of findings by answering each interview question with examples from transcriptions. The researcher then addresses thematic notes that communicate one's journey, endured challenges, acceptance discoveries, and mentoring value. The chapter concludes with a summary that answers Research Questions One and Two in a summarized manner. Contributor testimony retrieved from semi-structured interviews provides the justifications for understanding.

Findings

Findings are divided into two sections based upon the research questions. The first section focuses on Research Question One that addresses challenges and acceptance. The second section targets the mentoring aspects of this study. The two research questions designed for this study include the following:

1. What challenges did women pastors face related to acceptance in MPD?
2. What mentoring models were used in the professional development of women pastors in MPD?

With these questions in mind, the findings focus on each of the interview questions. Five questions related to challenges and acceptance that included background, challenges in becoming a minister, education, current challenges, and peer comparisons. Five questions were utilized that examined mentoring models to include mentoring preparation leading into ministry, the benefits and challenges of mentoring, gender guidelines for mentoring, mentoring others, and organizational mentoring.

Research Q1 - Challenges Leading to Acceptance

Interview Q1 - Background

Interview question one asked, “What occurred in your life that led you to ministry?” This question sought to understand historical backgrounds and personal testimony of each interviewee. All responses were unique and varied. Contributors listed youth camp, Emmaus (which remains a special ecumenical weekend journey that appeals to one’s spiritual surrender), participation in public demonstrations, a natural tendency for enjoying church, and life circumstances. One contributor specifically noted:

“The Emmaus weekend...was like the Genesis of formal ministry...”

Another naturally loved anything related to the church stating:

“As a child, I remember always wanting to be at church, not out of some duty, but out of church was a place that I knew that I was loved, that those people cared about me, and I cared about them, and there was just something significant to me about what happened in that place every time we gathered... just kind of wanted to be there as a kid.”

A third participant knew she wanted to be a pastor when the church modeled faith in action toward her family during the illness of one of her parents:

“I was seeing these Christians, these Lutherans like live out their faith.”

The contributor was referencing the meals brought to their home, communion provided in the home for the sick parent, and items such as logistical assistance in chauffeuring children to various destinations.

Interview Q2 - Challenges Becoming a Minister

Interview question two asked, “What challenges did you experience in becoming a minister?” The purpose for the line of inquiry was to seek information regarding challenges leading to ministry prior to formal acceptance as a minister. Some answers included learning that all churches do not accept women in ministry similar to the church in which they were raised, male colleagues receive placement much quicker than females, ingrained policy from more conservative affiliations, confidence, and denominational approval in policy did not secure ordination efforts on organizational or local levels. One subject communicated intentional efforts to block women in ministry:

“So, in the next week, I had five of the lay leaders of the church come to me and say, ‘We know you are going to be a minister, but you need to know that we are going to vote against women in ministry.’ ... the church had just voted a block against women in ministry. ‘We know in the end you will do it. We are apologizing now’.”

One interviewee cited the need to unlearn mannerisms and teachings that she had been taught as a child saying:

“I am finally here and... God is going to strike me dead because that conservative... tape was still playing in the other half of my head, so I had as much to unlearn about the fact that I could preach, as I did to learn about growing into who I was with preaching.”

Again, the answers remain unique and varied by individual. Yet, they are very similar.

Interview Q3 - Education

The third interview question addressed ministerial education by asking, “What role has education played in preparing you for ministry?” Most mainline denominations have mandated policies regarding the educational endeavors of their pastors, which is standard across all genders. Most answers included items such as an undergraduate degree; graduate work, seminary, or divinity school; and doctoral degrees such as a Doctor of Philosophy or a Doctorate of Ministry. However, special school resources; i.e., licensing school, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), sacred music options, internships, residencies, or field education, also may have impacted one’s academic quest in clerical arenas. One interviewee was excited to receive preaching class from another woman. She explained that it is rare to find a fellow woman active in ministry much less teaching a homiletics elective. The first day of class the professor told them:

“You have your own style for preaching, and I am here to help you find it.”

She wanted the students to know that a variety of approaches for preaching is okay; they do not have to follow a set pattern. Another participant noted the importance of CPE as a minister because at the time she was not allowed to do field education and obtained her credentials for that portion by tutoring male pastors. She said:

“You mean you didn’t do field education? I did Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) that is what changed me, that is when I knew I was called into ministry.”

Another contributor affirmed this statement:

“I loved, loved getting into the meat behind what it is that we believed... learning how to work with people in crisis situations...CPE was very important to me just learning the critical components of ministry.”

CPE remains valuable training within hospital environments, in hospice units, at mental health facilities, and in a host of other environments. The participant had a life-changing experience in her clinical environment at a mental health facility.

Interview Q4 - Current Challenges

Interview question four asked, “What challenges do you currently experience as a minister?” This question remains distinct from interview question two because it sought to provide clarity on challenges faced by ministers in their present roles versus the obstacles they had to overcome in establishing themselves as clergy. Relocation, job security, family responsibilities, career opportunities for advancement, declining congregations, and bearing multiple time-consuming hats appeared to permeate responses. Age and gender issues emerged for this particular question. One participant had a congregant that felt strongly that a woman should not pastor or preach and told her:

“I don’t believe a woman should be a pastor, even though I love you, and I love your teachings...I have received a lot from you. I can receive it from the classroom, but I cannot receive it from the pulpit.”

Another mentioned struggle with perceptions over her youthful demeanor stating:

“I did some work at a church with youth...the struggle was that the youth was convinced that I was not older than them.”

Yet another dealing with views of older women pastors seeking pastoral roles noted:

“I was 58, and no one looked at anybody over 55.”

Present struggles remain real for women clergy regardless of age, gender, familial responsibilities, marital status, etc.

Interview Q5 - Peer Comparisons

Interview question five asked, how their experiences related to those of their peers. The last of the questions relating to challenges, the particular objective was to gather perceptions on the subjects' views of their journeys related to their peers. The thought process was to search for similarities and differences. Responses covered a host of reflections, as some reported financial security for women versus men, associate roles in larger congregations versus sole pastoral leadership in smaller entities, stout feminism versus a heart for ministry, and odds that defeat even the best efforts compared with clergy who enter stable environments that more efficiently reflect the community's culture. One contributor noted the difficulty in coming to the area after being a native of another state. She said:

“I don't get the sense that the clergy in this Diocese are particularly concerned with one another. There are tight friendships with some people who have been here forever, but coming into this Diocese, I don't feel particularly welcome.”

Other observations reflected the importance of wearing clergy collars until death, while some found value in more substantial matters such as spiritual relationships. Some noted distinctive comparisons between younger clergy and pioneer women who paved the way in the 1960s and 1970s. A contributor noted:

“I think it is still difficult for women, but it is easier for the women of the millennial generation or generation Xers than it was for the pioneer women that are my peers...they did not get the big jobs to the extent that the males did. They are formed different from the pioneer women, and I think the pioneers want them to understand how difficult the struggle was and to be women of the struggle and

on some level our younger clergy certainly do accept that and on other levels they have to live their experience which is an experience of, if not equality, more parity certainly than the early pioneers.”

The contributor went on to explain differences in inclusive languages between the older and younger generations.

Research Q2 - Mentoring Models

Questions relating to mentoring were designed to examine mentoring tools that prepared them for ministry, discoveries regarding mentoring benefits and challenges, gender guidelines related to mentoring, whether they currently mentor upcoming ministers, and tools that their denominations may use for mentoring young pastors. Most noted informal mentoring as a preferred style due to natural flow and relationship building based on trust. Benefits were fairly obvious to most, and hindrances included items such as unavailability and poor fit due to personality styles. Some of the younger pastors remarked on the importance of mentoring, others on wellbeing and health. Most felt it did not matter whether same gender mentoring occurred or mixed gendering. However, in dealing with mixed gender environments, certain boundaries must be established for the protection of all parties. Most had mentored both males and females, and almost all reported situational influences regarding gender guidelines. Most currently mentor others or will be in a position to mentor in the future. A few reported they did not presently mentor anyone.

Interview Q6 - Mentoring Preparation

Interview question six asked, “What mentoring models have been used to prepare you for ministry?” Respondents discussed informal and formal models. Some

interviewees naturally received mentoring from well-meaning pastors in their home churches or from supportive family members, while others found assistance through alternative resources. Many enjoyed the luxuries of formal models that had been implemented by their host denomination as a resource for preparing young leaders for ministry. Coaching, networking, online tools, conference calls, support groups, and accountability partners also enhanced professional development. One young congregant in a conservative entity who was considering a call to ministry chose to settle for being a missionary or pastor's wife. Her moderate pastor affirmingly responded:

“You have more potential than that.”

Another young female leader received support when her pastor's wife took her under her wings and began training her for ministerial duties. In appreciation, the mentee said:

“Literally, she took every minute that she had with me, and she poured into my life.”

Another young person demonstrating potential for ministry also benefited from mentoring when the home pastor entrusted him to enter his pulpit. With appreciation, the minister reported that:

“And from time to time our pastor would be gone and he would ask me to preach and to my amazement I really enjoyed it...the more I did it, the more I loved it.”

Mentoring has inspired and assisted protégés in moving toward success; however, not all mentoring serves in efficient and effective ways.

Interview Q7 - Benefits and Challenges

“What benefits or challenges do you see as a minister regarding the value of mentoring?” served as interview question seven. This question was designed to prompt

reflection on that which works and does not work in mentoring in an attempt to define valuable and destructive mannerisms. Some remain unavailable, others may have health issues or other difficulties that prevent productivity, some outgrow one another or have personality conflict, and others remain in transitional careers such as the military and move away. Some have hidden agendas, come across as heavy-handed as one interviewee indicated, or have destructive mannerisms versus wholesome, constructive approaches. In some instances, the needs of the mentee exceeded the skill sets of the mentor. One contributor noted:

“I felt that she needed more than I could give her at that time so I recommended... she go to one of the chaplains.”

While some relationships required resourcing out, others had much better outcomes in benefitting all parties involved. One mentee reported the following about her mentor:

“Having a person...who...continued to invest in me by coming over to my house weekly, going over basic questions...is probably where I really started to grow.”

Comparing benefits and challenges in mentoring can prove quite helpful to young clergy and pastors who have been in their roles for some time and are looking for professional development. Understanding boundaries, benefits, and challenges also required an examination into the gender systems that work best or whether there are any differences.

Interview Q8 - Gender Guidelines

Interview question eight asked, “If any, what gender guidelines were used within your circle of influence to prepare you for leadership roles?” Most responded that it did not matter whether women were mentoring women or men; the environment must be the

product of a situational stimulant. For those participating in mixed gender mentoring, one participant offered that boundaries must be set. She said:

“I believe that there is an order... I won’t be alone with a man of God or a minister without my husband being there or the presence of someone else, that is just wisdom.”

One contributor noted:

“I don’t think it matters. I think it is more of do personalities click? Is there a chemistry, if you will, or a sense? I have done both and had good relationships, and other times they were just a square peg in a round hole.”

According to interviewees, gender guided mentoring works in a variety of ways through a host of circumstances without focus on same or mixed individuals.

Interview Q9 - Mentoring Others

“What mentoring models do you use to prepare others for pastoral ministry?” served as the conversation starter for interview question nine. Most interviewees participated in one-on-one informal approaches, some in more formal environments due to denominational leadership roles, and others were not actively mentoring anyone. One individual indicated that her system for beginning a mentoring relationship with someone involved self-reflection, a plan, and goals. She said:

“I need to know what do you want to do? Where do you want to go? What are your goals?”

One individual actively engages in and supports mentoring concepts. When asked if she currently mentors someone, she said:

“Yes, we used to do it face-to-face, but now we both live in different places so we do it through Skype or Facetime.”

This particular individual uses specific curriculum with her mentees to develop and to grow them into more productive citizens. She desires to see her mentees pay it forward and mentor others as well.

Interview Q10 - Organizational Mentoring

Interview question ten considered models that denominations use with their members. It asked, “What roles does your organization play in utilizing mentoring models in the education of pastoral leaders?” As pastors and church leaders move up the career ladder into arenas of greater responsibility, their opportunities to facilitate institutional mentoring models increase. One subject recalled UMC processes that provide group mentoring opportunities. This individual conveyed:

“Methodist process...called a provisional process, we have two retreats a year...And there’s a... speaker on leadership or Theology or personal growth, self-care, spiritual growth. And then we have work-shops.”

One contributor serving in her first official pastorate in a sole role has an assigned mentor. She reported:

“The bishop here has a mentoring program for the first three years of ministry...they always try to assign you someone of the same gender...that’s a little hard for me because there aren’t...any other female.... pastors currently in Richmond.”

For this particular pastor's denomination in which she serves as the only local female clergy, denominational leadership has permitted mentorship from women leaders in neighboring affiliations within her denomination.

Themes

Having addressed each interview question, it remained pertinent to explore the re-occurring four themes found within this study: journey, challenges, acceptance, and mentoring. The first theme included one's journey into ministry. Each contributor brought a rich element to the case study. One particularly noteworthy example included a story in which the female pastor completing her second year of college responded to a random career question of a stranger at a storage unit:

“One summer, ...in those first two years of college, we were moving some of my stuff from my dorm to a storage unit...this guy who worked at the storage facility was helping us, and he says, ‘when you graduate what do you want to do?’ Apparently, I said ...I’m going to be a minister. And he says, ‘oh you’re going to be like a children’s minister? Or work with the young people?’ And I said no, I’m going to be THE PASTOR. Now, I don’t really remember this but my mom does, and she has like reminded me of that over time.”

The second thematic occurrence throughout this study included challenges in ministry. The literature has supported that women pastors end up in struggling, declining, or closing congregations. This particular individual found herself in that very predicament not only once, but at least twice in her career as a MPD pastor. Both times the congregations failed to fully disclose their intentions when she accepted the positions. The following thematic challenge represented situations for many female clergy:

“A small church... finances were very tight. They decided to restructure and yoke with another church which was going to be a full-time appointment. This is my full-time appointment (referring to her full-time job) so I...was out of local church ministry for a year, and I really missed it. I asked for another appointment and we didn't have any...so I went for two years without appointment... I mean I had more time, but I really wanted to be ministering in a local church.”

Other interviewees in this study experienced similar dilemmas.

The third theme reflected the concept of acceptance for women pastors in MPD. One individual conveyed a cultural influence that resonates powerfully when examining historical influence and power distance concepts. Receiving ordination as the first African American woman minister in PC-USA, this subject disclosed that she struggled with preaching because she did not want to impose on male pastors of her race, especially if she was a better preacher. Her toil found its roots grounded and ingrained from years of segregated oppression. She divulged the following memory:

“I didn't want to preach the sermon because...I was told black women have to take care of black men... only black men can be...pastors in black churches... he (the counselor) said, ‘What is the problem?’ I don't want to be considered the enemy...in collusion with people who oppress black men. And if I preach better than they do, won't I be destroying that one place that black men consider that sacred desk ...He said, ‘Why don't you go ask the brothers.’ I said, ‘How do you all feel about if I preach’ ...I will be grateful to those black men to this day, ‘the harvest is plentiful the laborers are few, who are we to say who God can call to

ministry?’ And if they had said anything other than sending forth, I don’t know if I would have gone on.”

Although lengthy, this quoted theme represents the epitome in acceptance. Desiring desperately to respect assumed male roles within her race, she struggled with how her actions might impact those she loved. When they gave her authentic permission in a kind and accepting way to go beyond customary positioning to share God’s message, she experienced freedom in fulfilling her calling, which empowered her.

The final theme involved mentoring relationships. The most appropriate way to continue a mentoring cycle remains to pay it forward. One particular participant received mentoring, demonstrates mentoring, and trains individuals on becoming mentors.

Reflecting on her philosophy of mentoring, she stated:

“My ideal ministry role would be... my passion is in mentoring. I think as a person, there is information everywhere and there’s people who give information but until you ...apply it to your life, it won’t mean much. And I think that in relationship with others...that application comes in...with regular relationship and investment in another person... people grow.”

According to literature and to the subjects participating in this study, mentoring serves an influential role in overcoming challenges that lead to acceptance for women pastors in MPD.

This chapter presented findings in relation to the two research questions for this study:

1. What challenges did women pastors face related to acceptance in MPD?

2. What mentoring models were used in the professional development of women pastors in MPD?

Research Question One focused on the challenges that women pastors face related to acceptance. The answer remains situational, as some apply to both men and women. Yet, many challenges are unique to women. Moreover, different women remain impacted in diverse ways; e.g., single women and married women report similar impediments (smaller congregations, limited pay, and a lack of job stability) but distinctive hindrances as well (congregational concern over work-home balance compared with perceiving single pastors as always available because they have no other responsibilities). Furthermore, certain women experience blatant difficulties related to gender. Others may have no connections to gender strife regarding challenges. One program developed in the mid-90s incorporated a grant to develop curriculum designed to address challenges and to assist women in achieving acceptance. One of the contributors shared:

“We developed a four week curriculum...for churches that were in the search process to help them think more openly about hiring women ministers... what we were hearing was...will we lose members, will giving go down, can a woman provide the leadership that we need...we had this one old scruffy guy in overalls saying, ‘I didn’t want a woman preacher at this church, I didn’t think it was a good idea, but you better not try to take her now, because we love her and we want to keep her’.”

Much of what was spoken in that statement rings true regarding challenges that women pastors must face. It also speaks volumes regarding the unknowns for those who resist female clergy.

Summary

This study found the following summarized list of challenges that women face. Although the list appears to be extensive, the researcher cannot claim that it is complete.

- Congregational willingness to try new things, trust builders
- Denominational transition
- Unrealistic expectations of energy and revitalization toward church growth
- Former female clergy were ineffective
- Establishing a sense of normalcy in having women in leadership
- Cultural influences and location
- Smaller, declining, closing churches
- Less pay, job security, and limited opportunities
- Finding correct leadership strategy
- Balancing work and life
- Demographics
- Retention rates
- Hidden agendas, social objectives, feminism
- Educational requirements and church protocol procedures (ordination, licensing)

Research Question Two targeted mentoring models used for professional development of women pastors in MPD. While different denominations employ models

specifically generated for their leaders, the two main formats include formal and informal structures. Formal frameworks encompass specialized designs that apply specifically to a target audience. Informal mentoring activity may be as simple as getting together to touch base with another individual, as noted by one contributor:

“Hey, let’s get together in two weeks or a month from now...I want to hear all about how everything is going with you.”

Mentoring models come in all shapes and sizes ranging from individual to group. Face-to-face, online resources, conference calls, and other technological resources provide creative avenues for designing a best-fit approach. Church environments can be unique organizational structures. Thus, mentoring models specialized for the professional development of women pastors in MPD can easily be generated to one’s environment and circumstances. This study observed the following summarized options for mentoring models in reference to women pastors. Although extensive, the researcher cannot claim that the list is complete.

- Formal versus informal
- Accountability and peer groups
- Ecumenical, interfaith community support opportunities
- Natural connections
- Technological resources: computer, websites, Skype, chat rooms, phone
- Denominational models
- Networking venues
- Coaching tools
- First-call resources

- Global organizations
- Self-care facilities, products
- Therapy and resilient providers
- Learning what not to do from less than constructive influences
- Hobby and recreation
- Continuing education
- Establish boundaries, goals, objectives, plan, vision
- Model and demonstrate appropriate mannerism
- Embrace opportunities

This chapter noted findings by distinguishing specific interview question responses, organizing thematic contributions, and consolidating answers to the two research questions in a summarized format. Chapter V elaborates on the findings by discussing limitations, outcomes, implications, literary connections, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter considers limitations, outcomes, implications, and literary connections to the study. Additionally, the researcher provides suggestions for further research, should individuals desire to pursue emerging ideas generated from the interest of this topic. The purpose behind this study was to discern challenges faced by women pastors in MPD in accruing acceptance and to examine mentoring models used, if any, for professional development. Specifically, in order to produce findings, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What challenges did women pastors face related to acceptance in MPD?
2. What mentoring models were used in the professional development of women pastors in MPD?

Limitations

Limiting this study, the researcher acknowledges some bias regarding challenges faced by women in ministry due to personal experience. Additionally, the examiner recognizes the importance of pursuing gender equality in spiritual leadership settings as cultural progression. Furthermore, the author understands the importance of mentoring models in developing professionals. As this remains a qualitative inquiry, it is difficult to individually protect from all scrutiny. However, obstacles were addressed and challenges were properly communicated through educational channels to reduce tensions experienced by individuals, groups, and/or organizations. This empowered and enhanced perceptions.

Other limitations included self-report through interviews in retrieving data from one's personal lens of observation; reliable, mindful recall from participants; and the

ability to reduce flaws in non-verbal expressions through the transcription process. Some may have perceived regional bias, as the study was conducted in specific areas of Virginia. Nevertheless, all limitations and subjectivities were properly noted in protecting the integrity of this study.

Results/Outcome of the Study

The final report produced similarities and differences in discovering a clear understanding of the experiences and challenges women pastors face related to acceptance in MPD, as well as mentoring perceptions (Kruth, 2015). This was paradoxical. The first research question sought to identify challenges faced by women pastors related to acceptance. Contributors provided the following concepts to resolve that question.

One challenge was whether congregational willingness to try new things provided opportunities for innovation and diffusion. Increased faith measures and trust building may result from overcoming this challenge. Also, women face challenges when maneuvering between denominations in securing acceptance. When new pastors come to a congregation, unrealistic expectations prevail in hopes of renewed energy and revitalization toward growth. Some churches report bad experiences with female clergy and seem hesitant to try again.

Cultural influences, location (rural versus urban), and establishing normalcy in having a woman pastor can create challenges leading to acceptance more than with men. Women appear to enter smaller, declining, closing churches which creates less pay, limited job security, and glass ceiling effects. As alluded to in the theories discussion, women also struggle to find the right leadership balance within congregations that

become more prevalent when establishing authority. As mothers, it is difficult to find a balance between work and home life that causes families to receive the short end of her attentions.

Demographics such as age, ethnicity, gender, location, and other environmental stereotypes can lead to hindrances for women pastors. Due to overwhelming demands, multiple hats, and familial callings, women may not remain in the environment as long as male pastors. Hidden agendas, social objectives, and overly strong feminist mannerisms can create challenging options for female clergy. Finally, similar to men, women must meet educational requirements and denominational protocols that lead to ordination and/or licensing. Denominations that are less affirming toward women may use the formal educational components to create further difficulty, as some have experienced unfair practices compared to male colleagues regarding extra training.

The objective for the second research question was to recognize mentoring models that women clergy utilize, by choice or denominational mandate, which produce professional development efforts. The first distinction that developed was the difference in formal versus informal structures. Most respondents prefer informal options to formalized procedures. Women also benefit from accountability and peer groups; ecumenical, interfaith, community support opportunities; and natural connections. Technological components also aid modern day women pastors as computers, phones, laptops, handheld devices, website resources, conference calls, and other social media prevail.

Many mainline entities provide formal denominational mentoring models that include networking platforms, coaching, first-call resources, group gatherings,

internships, and residencies. Global organizations provide groups of influence and training. Younger generation pastors also find mentoring support through self-care facilities and products, therapy and resiliency providers, and hobby/recreational outlets. Learning what not to do from ineffective mentoring helps women pastors. Continuing education, embracing opportunities, and modeling that which one learns also provides female clergy with mentoring knowledge.

Finally, mentors desire that mentees establish boundaries, goals, objectives, plan, and vision into their mentoring objectives. The list of challenges from Research Question One and the mentoring models found in response to Research Question Two do not exhaust all options but emerged from semi-structured interviews in which participants elaborated on their experiences regarding those elements.

Significance of the Study

The practical, scholarly contribution for this research pursuit was to ascertain the continued challenges that women face in ministry despite receiving formal acceptance and recognition more than 40 years ago. Additionally, it is important to comprehend the impact of mentoring on those who attained positional respect and acknowledgment. To this researcher's knowledge, no specific study has combined challenges, acceptance, and mentoring models in relation to women pastors in MPD. Specifically, this case study focused on the seven MPD previously listed. Although various religious institutions and their unique characteristics have been studied throughout history, the Review of Literature did not reveal the specific grouping addressed in this research component.

Finally, it is the desire of this researcher to use this inquiry as a resourceful tool for empowering future leaders in ministry with educational and scholarly preparation

resources. Thus, this examination aspires to bring well-rounded clarification and advanced awareness to church organizations, ministers, and congregations regarding challenges, acceptance, and mentoring phenomena as it pertains to women clergy for continued progression.

Discussion

This study intended to determine the challenges women pastors face in relation to acceptance in MPD. It also sought to recognize mentoring models that guide their professional development. Overall the findings did not surprise the author. Although women in pastoral leadership have enjoyed increased improvement in their professional pursuits, problematic components remain that will never entirely dissolve due to humanistic nature.

Observations

One aspect the author found intriguing was the struggle with priestly garments. Considering the length of time women have been approved for ordination, one would think the denomination affiliates would work harder in obtaining a resolution. Another intriguing observation was the influence of social agenda through the feminist movement. Although feminism and equality pursuits enter church dynamics, the researcher did not fully realize their negative impact. Also, in considering womanly progression, the literature has conveyed an overwhelming presence of women in church bodies. As mainlines have embraced inclusion language in accepting women, and women make up the majority, this examiner questions the reason for congregational decline.

Mentoring Reflections

When reflecting on the mentoring models produced within this study, the investigator finds no unique or prevalent tool that has not surfaced in previous research. However, the inquirer is impressed with denominational efforts to provide formal tools to pastoral leaders for the enhancement of their professional pursuits. Additionally, the researcher is pleased to observe that younger, generational pastors appear to be fully engaged in the benefits of mentoring and remain steady in utilizing those benefits for empowered leadership. One item of concern for the researcher is the complacency of some younger pastors in capitalizing on the wisdom of the pioneer women pastors. Likewise, it appears that the pioneer women pastors could benefit from the technological savvy of younger pastors. A means to bridge the gap is needed in order that both generations feel validated and seek resourceful gain from one another. Most participants appear to function within mixed gendered styles of mentoring. Yet, it was refreshing to observe that each took precaution in setting sexually protective boundaries. In both observing challenges and recognizing mentoring tools that lead to enhanced acceptance, it is interesting that adding racial equations provides further glimpses into the case study phenomenon for women pastors.

Connections to Previous Research/Theories

Wiele (2015) noted that wiser, richer, and stronger congregations “refuse to make gender an issue in congregational leadership” (p. 8). Despite provisions to include women as pastors with hopes of renewal and forward thinking directives to generate interest and involvement of the unchurched into congregational institutions within MPD,

“Mainline Watch” (2007) revealed that the UMC, PC-USA, and ELCA reported continuing loss of members.

Almost all findings for this study had literary support. Balance between work and family, marital status, cultural nuances, and hiring processes confirm the work by Pranoto and Durso (2016). Participants in this study acknowledged struggles with having children and balancing work priorities, admitted that being single or married impacts their relational capabilities with congregants, and confirmed cultural challenges when moving between a parish in one state versus a congregation in a different state; several contributors noted challenges when maneuvering through hiring processes compared with placement. Congregant perceptions regarding prescriptive and descriptive roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002); decision-making styles (Finlay, 1996); and congregational mothering (Shehan et al., 1999), as noted in empirical research, mirrored responses made by subjects in this study. One spoke on reactions of congregants when she was inflamed compared with males. Several communicated difficulties when asking staff to complete a task if the employee was male and older. The contributors felt forced to assert themselves as the pastoral, senior leadership within the organization. One subject admitted that mothering her congregation suited her leadership style, particularly when having difficult conversations. Likewise, mentoring literature has supported positioning of study subjects. Specifically, the younger pastors affirmed the position by LeGrand et al. (2013) on the importance of health and wellbeing. Additionally, some participants affirmed the need for utilizing peer support in overcoming feelings of isolation and depressive tendencies (Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2013). Tangenberg’s (2013) communication regarding naturally occurring, informal mentoring, which involves

gender sensitivity and incorporates setting boundaries, received affirmation from multiple respondents in this study.

Conclusions and Implications

Many women in pastoral professions experience challenges and face limitations from peers, congregants, and the public when accepting and pursuing a call to ministry. Despite the seemingly overwhelming data that suggest being a woman in ministry is excessively hard, some not only support the concept but embrace it. This leads to empowerment for women that provides satisfying and fulfilling work, which produces motivation and retention, not to mention the spiritual and eternal benefits. Training, mentoring, developing resiliency/coping skills, and promoting wellbeing serve as excellent tools for female ministers (women pastors) and can enhance a man's ministry. Furthermore, the need for mentoring has never been greater as more women brave the prohibiting forces and enter ministry, as scholarly institutions struggle to keep up with changing roles and expectations for pastors working in the field, and as quality information exchange continues to be a desired norm (Newkirk & Cooper, 2013). Thus, the benefits of mentoring consistently reinforce its momentum; mentoring is becoming a guiding source heavily valued by recipients. As Morton (2016) noted, the advantages of personal and professional development through prayer and leadership from her female pastors prepared her for a life working in ministry. Yet, despite all the positives produced from mentoring, few ministers are willing to serve in such a capacity (Newkirk & Cooper, 2013). Educating interested parties and providing platforms for interaction can desensitize the subject and enhance cultural normality. Thus, this study not only addressed the challenges women pastors in MPD face relating to acceptance, but also the

value of mentoring models utilized in their professional development for church leadership.

The concept of cultural acceptance has not only benefitted some women in MPD, but also has the potential for encouraging approval from denominations that hesitate in recognizing women as pastors. Flowers (2013) noted Durso's work (2013) in stating that female clergy have two options for overcoming challenges in receiving acceptance: "stop waiting for existing churches to change" (p. 116); and challenge young women leaders to remain proactive, creating reform within their present churches.

Suggestions for Future Research

Much more can be studied about this topic. It seems somewhat overwhelming to begin to contemplate the possibilities. This study explored challenges related to acceptance for women pastors in MPD; it also discerned mentoring models incorporated into professional development tools. It began with historical discussions that brought to light the chain of events leading to denominational recognition and acceptance. As 40 to 60 years have passed since women began receiving ordination, it may be interesting to study comparisons between then and now regarding the road to full inclusion.

Also, researchers may choose to explore the differing leadership styles between pastoral, pioneer women and modern day, younger generation pastors. During this study the inquirer also questioned the reason for church decline because many specialized social groups focus on women and equality, racial interest, and sexual orientation. With the extent of available opportunities, it seems logical that churches would be increasing rather than decreasing in membership.

This study specifically addressed MPD. It would be interesting to conduct research using the same framework with predominantly evangelical women pastors for a comparison of the two studies. One researcher pointed out that this study may also serve denominations that do not embrace the concept of women in pastoral leadership. Finally, research into God's plan for biblical, feminine womanhood, His idea for masculinity, and the way in which the two intertwine into current culture may be particularly interesting. This concentration for exploration may continue to intensify and to escalate as women move forward and progress in leadership.

Summary

This qualitative case study reviewed challenges faced by women pastors in MPD related to acceptance and mentoring models impacting professional development. The results of the study align with empirical research. Additionally, while much has improved for women pastors in MPD, some work remains, as the challenges have not necessarily disappeared. Factors influencing acceptance include culture, family dynamics, and denominational politics. Younger generations benefit and will continue to do so from the pioneer women who paved the way during the exceedingly difficult years when formal, but not official, acceptance linked with modern culture. Some have questioned whether the increases would have been as substantial had there not been a shortage of male representation. Younger women pastors appear ready to pick up the gauntlet from the pioneer, women pastors and to carry forward the flame. Although this has been a heavily researched field, it continues to draw interest. With church dynamics changing due to technological advances such as live streaming and multi-campus mega

entities, the dynamics for women pastors overcoming challenges and pursuing acceptance may once again change the direction of the story. Only time will tell.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: Challenges faced by women pastors related to acceptance in mainline protestant denominations and mentoring models used.

Investigator: Rita G. Burnett (Doctoral Student)
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Western Kentucky University
804-731-7972
rita.burnett168@topper.wku.edu



You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

You must be 18 years old or older to participate in this research study.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

- Nature and Purpose of the Project:** You are being asked to participate in a research study that involves an exploration of the challenges faced by women pastors related to acceptance in mainline protestant denominations. Additionally, this study will investigate possible mentoring models used for professional development. Because there remains so many denominations with such varying views, it seems that research into the phenomenon would benefit current and future women pursuing leadership roles in pastoral venues. Furthermore, this research seeks to determine whether mentoring efforts assist in overcoming the challenges faced in acceptance.
- Explanation of Procedures:** First, you are asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire. It should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Then, you are being asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that incorporates ten questions. Five questions will relate to challenges faced by women pastors. The remaining five questions will inquire concerning mentoring models. The project investigator will conduct the interview which will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time.
- Discomfort and Risks:** No foreseeable risks or discomforts are involved in this study.
- Benefits:** The researcher seeks to create an awareness of the challenges faced by women pastors related to acceptance in mainline protestant denominations. Additionally, it seems

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conducive to discern mentoring models that can enhance one's career objectives. The information will also assist the researcher in developing a leadership based mentoring model that can improve opportunities for women pastors. Furthermore, the findings can enhance instruction components that relate to the development of female clergy. Arming pastors with such resources provides well-rounded leadership for congregations nationally and globally. It prepares current and future aspirers for diversified roles.

Thus, as an interested party, once the study is completed a findings brief will be forwarded to you via email or postal services that will convey what the data indicates as relevant and important thus far.

5. **Confidentiality:** Any identifiable information will be held separately from the coded interview results. A password protected file will be kept for three years with access only granted to the researcher. After this time, any documentation from your participation will be deleted. The confidentiality of your individual information will be maintained in any publications or presentations regarding this study. All results from the investigation will be reported as a comprehensive and collective summation.

6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:** Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Signature of Participant

Date

Witness

Date

- I agree to the audio/video recording of the research. **(Initial here)** _____

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129



WKU IRB# 17-210
Approval - 12/13/2016
End Date - 12/13/2017
Expedited
Original - 12/13/2016

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Data Questionnaire

Age _____ Non-disclosure _____

Gender Male _____ Female _____ Other _____ Non-disclosure _____

Race Caucasian _____ African American _____ Asian _____ Hispanic _____
Other _____ Non-disclosure _____

Marital Status Single _____ Married _____ Separated _____
Divorced _____ Other _____ Non-disclosure _____

Current Location of Service _____

Any other demographic information that you would like noted:

License date: (approximate) _____ N/A _____

Non-disclosure _____

Ordination date: (approximate) _____ N/A _____

Non-disclosure _____

Ministerial Duties Conducted (Circle all that apply): Weddings Funerals

Preaching Teaching Speaking Engagements: Conferences

Retreats Other (list)

Sacraments: (list)

Visitation: Hospital Shut-in Other (list)

Other Ministerial Duties:

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

	RQ1-What challenges did women pastors face related to acceptance in MPD?	RQ2-What mentoring models were used in the professional development of women pastors in MPD?	
IQ1	What occurred in your life that led you to ministry? (history, background, testimony)	What mentoring models have been used to prepare you for ministry?	IQ6
IQ2	What challenges did you experience in becoming a minister?	What benefits or challenges do you see as a minister regarding the value of mentoring?	IQ7
IQ3	What role has education played in preparing you for ministry?	If any, what gender guidelines were used within your circle of influence to prepare you for leadership roles?	IQ8
IQ4	What challenges do you currently experience as a minister?	What mentoring models do you use to prepare others for pastoral ministry?	IQ9
IQ5	How are your experiences related to those of your peers?	What role does your organization play in utilizing mentoring models in the education of pastoral leaders?	IQ10