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INTENTIONAL MALE ALLIES/ADVOCATES: HOW MALE LEADERS CAN SUCCESSFULLY CHAMPION FEMALE MINISTERS IN THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD U.S.A.

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HOW MALE LEADERS CAN SUCCESSFULLY CHAMPION FEMALE MINISTERS

IN THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD U.S.A.

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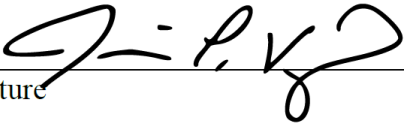
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ABSTRACT

While the Assemblies of God (AG) endorses women in ministry through its position paper and bylaws, a dichotomy has existed between its egalitarian theology and practice since its inception in 1914. One key to narrowing such a gap involves intentional and countercultural male leaders who actively train, empower, affirm, and mentor women called to ministerial leadership. This research defines biblical egalitarian leadership, identifies exemplary female leaders and their male champions in the Old and New Testaments, and explores the best practices of male allyship for female leaders through a literature review and a qualitative survey of active AG male allies or advocates. This research sought to provide a solution to the perpetuating problem of gender disparity in the male-centric leadership culture of the AG. The study also identified the common characteristics of a likely male champion: a male district/network leader or local pastor in the age groups of 50s or 60s with a graduate or post-graduate degree, who is married to a working wife outside the home. As a result of this research, a podcast series was created to resource aspiring male ministers, who desire to embrace their God-given responsibility to help advance called and qualified women into higher leadership.

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GLOSSARY

Complementarianism: A theological view that only men are uniquely called and qualified to do the work of the ministry at the highest level of leadership. Women can hold secondary leadership positions as long as their teachings are limited to children and other women.

Egalitarianism: A theological view that both men and women are equally called and equipped by God to do the work of the ministry at all leadership levels.

Cross-gender Collaboration/Mentorship: Male-female interactions or engagements in professional leadership/ministry contexts that normalize mutually edifying opportunities through gender-inclusive partnership, worship, fellowship, or mentorship for personal growth and collective win.

Gender-inclusive Leadership/Ministry: Dynamics of leadership or ministry that intentionally invites, engages, and advances men and women at all levels for increasing creativity and effectiveness by learning from diverse perspectives, experiences, and knowledge.

Male Advocates or Allies: Men who publicly support, promote, or stand in the gap for women to help reverse the barriers or challenges in their leadership journey. They often collaborate and cooperate with women to accomplish common goals, objectives, or causes. However, not all advocates or allies are champions depending on their level of understanding, involvement, or consistency of championing practices.

Male Champions: While not all advocates or allies are champions, all champions are advocates or allies. These are men who intentionally engage in *ongoing* cross-gender training, empowering, advocating/affirming, and mentoring opportunities to advance women called to ministry while onboarding aspiring male champions.

The Billy Graham Rule (BGR): Broadly understood as avoidance of being alone with the opposite gender in any context whether in pastoral counseling, discipleship, meeting, eating, or ministry travel to prevent false accusations or gossips that could taint a minister's reputation. The original intent of the BGR was to keep traveling ministers accountable in financial abuse, sexual immorality, anti-church/anti-clergy attitude, and false publicity.[1]

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[1] Billy Graham, "What's 'the Billy Graham Rule'?," *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*, last modified July 23, 2019, accessed March 1, 2021, https://billygraham.org/story/the-modesto-manifesto-a-declaration-of-biblical-integrity.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROJECT INTRODUCED

Introduction

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matt 9:37; Luke 10:2). Jesus spoke these words more than two thousand years ago. Yet, they still ring true today as 23 percent of the U.S. population remains religiously unaffiliated, according to the 2020 Census of American Religion.[1] Christians agree on the mission of reaching the lost but disagree on who is qualified to fulfill the role of spiritual leadership. Complementarianism argues that God ordains only men to serve at the highest ministry level, while egalitarianism claims that God calls and equips both men and women to serve as spiritual leaders at all levels based on their faith and obedience, not gender. However, many women within the egalitarian tradition experience a dichotomy between the affirming positional statement and exclusive leadership culture that fails to celebrate and normalize their complete integration as ministry colleagues. This research seeks to narrow such a gap by exploring the critical roles of male champions and their implications on women's experiences in ministry.

Rationale for the Project

Since its inception in 1914, the Assemblies of God U.S.A. (AG) has welcomed Spirit-empowered women to participate in the *missio Dei* according to Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:16-18.

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[1] "The 2020 Census of American Religion," *PRRI*, July 8, 2021, accessed October 8, 2021, https://www.prri.org/research/2020-census-of-american-religion.

During the early days of the Pentecostal movement sparked by the Azuza Street Revival, women were ordained as missionaries and evangelists without voting rights at the General Council since voting was limited to elders, a role held exclusively by men.[2] Women finally received voting rights at the 1920 General Council—the same year the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote in the United States—but the official recognition of their full equal ministerial rights to perform sacerdotal duties did not occur until the 1935 General Council.[3]

In 2018, after more than one hundred years since its founding, the AG appointed its first woman, Donna Barrett, to the national Executive Leadership Team (ELT).[4] According to the 2020 AG statistics, 27 percent of the total credentialed ministers within the Fellowship were women—a significant jump from 16 percent in 2000. Yet, the number of female ministers between 1977 (the earliest year available on data) and 1999 increased 15 to 16.2 percent. Furthermore, fewer than 1 percent of female ministers served in higher leadership roles such as district executive presbyters, district officers, or national leaders. [5]

While the appointment of Barrett, followed by her election as General Secretary, was a historic breakthrough and a timely affirmation for female ministers in the AG, it will remain an anomaly without intentionally opening doors for more women called to and equipped for higher leadership. A survey of AG female lead pastors concluded that male mentors, allies, or champions are the key to bridging the gap between the AG official stance on women in ministry

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[2] Deborah Menken Gill, "The Contemporary State of Women in Ministry in the Assemblies of God," *Pneuma* 17, no. 1 (1995): 33.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Mark Forrester, "Donna Barrett Elected General Secretary," *PENews*, last modified April 23, 2018, accessed December 6, 2019, https://news.ag.org:443/news/donna-barrett-elected-general-secretary.

[5] General Secretary's Office, "Female Ministers 1977-2020," Statistics, July 16, 2021, accessed July 20, 2021, http://www.ag.org/About/Statistics.

and its praxis.[6] Another survey of AG female executive leaders from various ministry contexts highlighted the critical role of male leaders in increasing the visibility and influence of female ministers by reshaping the organizational leadership culture.[7] Since men occupy most of the top decision-making leadership in the AG, their unique role in advancing women remains critical, as modeled by Barrett's champion, Doug Clay, General Superintendent of the AG.

Like Clay, male leaders in the AG have much potential to make history by leveraging their positional influence to help advance called and qualified women to the next level of leadership. With aspiring male champions in mind, this research will provide proven championing practices that male leaders can implement to help remove the barriers for female ministers, resolve gender disparity at all leadership levels, and restore cross-gender mentoring relationships for ongoing leadership development and ministry collaboration. The research will lay a theological foundation by examining selected countercultural male champions in the Bible, followed by a literature review on male allyship and its implications on female leadership development. The project will include a survey of a selected group of current male champions to address how men can train, empower, affirm, and mentor women called to ministerial leadership. This project will assess and address the following research question: How can male leaders successfully champion female ministers in the Assemblies of God U.S.A.?

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[6] Saehee Duran, "Female Leadership: A Literature Review and Human Subjects Research" (doctoral term paper, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL, 2019), 30.

[7] Saehee Duran, "The Qualitative Research on the Health of the Assemblies of God (USA) Concerning the Advancement of Female Ministers to Executive Leadership Roles" (doctoral term paper, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL, 2020), 16.

Relationship of the Project to the Researcher's Ministry

In 2003, God called me to ministry shortly after marrying a fourth-generation AG American minister in Suwon, South Korea. His exact words were, "Saehee, you will be a minister in your own right one day." I was confused and afraid. The confusion came as a result of being new to Christianity and never desiring to serve as a minister, and the fear was caused by hearing God's voice for the first time coupled with an anxiety of not wanting to disturb the male-only pastoral leadership world. After all, I lived in a Confucianist culture and never saw a single female minister in my upbringing. Despite the dissonance and internal conflict, when I finally shared what God had told me with my husband, I was even more confused and shocked by his response. He was affirmative and genuinely happy for my call to ministry. Since then, he has been my greatest mentor, cheerleader, and advocate on my ministerial journey. Every female minister needs a champion like him.

Meanwhile, I have had a few unforgettable encounters with male ministers who were on the opposite spectrum. One fellow lead pastor raised my gender as an issue during a lead pastoral retreat discussion. Since I was the only female lead pastor back then, he expressed discomfort about participating in an overnight retreat unless his wife accompanied him. I struggled with whether I should go or not. In the end, I chose to go as a fellow lead pastor, and he showed up without his wife. We all had a great time of fellowship without compromising sexual integrity.

Another male minister, who serves with me on a national ministry, graciously accepted my request for a ride from the airport since we were going to the same event. Unfortunately, he called me the very next morning to retract his offer. He apologized and explained his conviction about modeling what he teaches to his church staff: i.e., practicing the Billy Graham Rule (BGR) to avoid any wrong perception of sexual immorality by being alone with a woman other than his

wife. I accepted his apology and respected his decision. I listened and honored his conviction and preference, but I was frustrated with his fear-based decision that made me feel sexualized, objectified, and mistreated in a brief three-minute conversation. After careful reflection and prayer, I wrote him a follow-up email to inform him about the implications of such a decision for women in ministry. He received it with respect and a sincere desire to improve his future interactions with female ministers. I believe he represents many good-hearted male leaders who genuinely respect female colleagues while unintentionally falling into the trap of unintentional sexism. This research aims to equip these male ministers with proven championing strategies to become better allies or advocates for women in ministry.

When God called me to ministry, He was fully aware of my gender. He knew my femaleness was not a threat to the body of Christ or His mission. Yet, many ministers forfeit God-ordained opportunities to model countercultural allyship as people of influence. Unless ministry colleagues intentionally create pathways for mutual edification and advancement in their ministerial journey, it will take another four decades until the number of female ministers reaches near 50 percent in the AG.

Male leaders can help advance women in a God-honoring and mutually edifying way without compromising each other's integrity, faith, reputation, or moral standard. As the national training coordinator of the AG Network of Women Ministers (NWM), I have the privilege of equipping both male and female co-laborers in Christ to affirm, value, and empower one another for God's mission. Through my unique positions, I see the systemic barriers female ministers face while sensing the cautiousness of male colleagues. Hope remains, however, for resolving this male-female tension in ministerial leadership to serve God and His Church better together. Although rethinking or revising personal conviction may feel challenging, I pray this study will

help provide practical guides on cross-gender collaboration in ministry that all ministers can implement in their contexts. Meanwhile, I trust this research will yield hope and healing to female ministers who lead with resilience and daily obedience to God's call despite the challenges and barriers they experience in the male-dominated leadership culture, which often remain invisible to men.

Limitations of the Project

Since numerous studies on women in ministry address gender disparity in leadership, this research will focus on a solution to the problem. While part of the research will address the barriers and challenges female ministers face, the theological-biblical dimensions and literature review will highlight the important roles of male allies or advocates in championing women in leadership. Some of the misunderstood Scriptures (e.g., 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-12), often used to justify subjugating roles of women in ministry, will be discussed briefly in the project dissertation. However, the scope of the research, especially the qualitative research, is limited to the AG, which affirms the egalitarian view of women in ministry.[8]

The literature review will identify some of the best and worst practices of male allyship and cross-gender collaboration through the lens of gender intelligent leadership training, empowering, affirming/advocating, and mentoring. The project will conduct online qualitative research by surveying a selected group of credentialed male ministers in the AG identified as

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[8] General Council of the Assemblies of God, "The Role of Women in Ministry as Described in Holy Scripture," position papers, August 9-11, 2010, accessed May 15, 2021, https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/The-Role-of-Women-in-Ministry. Also see Article VII Ministry, Section 2.l Eligibility of Women in the 2021 General Council Constitution and Bylaws, https://ag.org/About/About-the-AG/Constitution-and-Bylaws.

active champions by their female mentees in a previous doctoral qualitative survey.[9] These twenty-two men (out of thirty-nine respondents) expressed their willingness to participate in further study by providing their email addresses for follow-up. Twenty-five additional men, who could not participate in the previous survey, will be invited to share their perspectives and experiences as male allies or advocates who champion women in ministerial ministry.

Research Question and Anticipated Results

The guiding question throughout research will be: How can male leaders successfully champion female ministers in the Assemblies of God U.S.A.? Anticipated research outcomes include: (1) a solid theological-biblical foundation on the crucial roles of male champions, (2) practical guides on successful cross-gender mentorship and other championing practices based on biblical and modern examples of male allies or advocates, and (3) relevant online training resources for aspiring male champions via the Network of Women Ministers website.

Upon gathering the qualitative survey data from active male leaders nominated by their female mentees, I will identify themes from their responses to discover how male allies or advocates can support women in their ministerial journey.

Possible side benefits of this study include a growing number of male champions in the AG based on theological-biblical conviction, positive peer pressure, increasing visibility of female ministers at all levels of leadership and the restored image of male ministers as supportive allies or advocates rather than threats or barriers to personal growth and leadership advancement.

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[9] The previous online qualitative survey was part of the doctoral study completed in April 2021. Thirty-nine active male mentors—identified by their female mentees currently serving in various AG leadership roles—shared their observations regarding women in ministry and experiences of cross-gender training, mentoring, and collaboration. Saehee Duran, "A Contextual Study: Male Empowering and Advocating for Women in Ministry Leaderships" (doctoral term paper, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL, 2021).

Furthermore, broader applications of this research can extend to in-person training opportunities at various AG events such as district sectional meetings or councils, men's ministry retreats, or breakout sessions at General Council. It is the expectation that the final product of this research will culminate in a published text to be shared with new credentialed ministers or turn into a practical theology course for Christian higher education institutions.

Goals and Objectives

Following are three goals with relevant objectives rising from each goal.

1. To establish a theology of ministerial equity between all humans by:
   a. Discussing opposing views on ministerial equity: egalitarianism vs. complementarianism
   b. Identifying biblical examples of male allies or advocates and their countercultural cross-gender collaborations in ministry
2. To examine the essential roles of male allies or advocates and their championing practices that affirm, empower, and advance women in leadership by:
   a. Exploring the best and worst practices in the marketplace, the church, and para-church organizations through a literature review
   b. Conducting qualitative research through an anonymous online survey of active AG male champions identified by their female mentees
3. To offer tangible action steps that aspiring male champions can implement in their immediate contexts to remove gender barriers for female ministers by:
   a. Re-contextualizing the Billy Graham Rule

    b.   Developing a cross-gender leadership model that fosters a collaborative and inclusive leadership culture

    c.   Providing a series of short podcasts on the Network of Women Ministers' website and YouTube channel to equip aspiring male champions in the AG districts for authentic cross-gender engagement and collaboration with their female ministry colleagues

Summary

This research will explore how male allies or advocates can successfully champion female ministers in their ministerial journey in the AG. The biblical-theological foundation coupled with a literature review will discover the essential roles of male champions and their direct influence on women's ministerial journeys. The descriptive survey of selected male ministers will identify the common characteristics of male allies or advocates and their proven championing practices. The survey outcomes will be turned into a series of podcasts for the Network of Women Ministers to resource aspiring male champions to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:19) alongside their spiritual sisters and co-laborers in Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Chapter two contains two-part research—theological and biblical dimensions and a literature review—to answer the research question: How can male leaders successfully champion female ministers in the Assemblies of God U.S.A.? Theological and biblical studies explore the source of leadership, gender equality in ministerial leadership with the competing view, and selected female leaders along with their male allies or advocates in the Bible. The literature review focuses on female leadership in the churches and marketplace, myths regarding female leadership, barriers for female ministers, and potential solutions to these barriers, which men and women in the AG can apply at every level of ministerial leadership context.

Theological and Biblical Dimensions

Source of leadership

The Bible names various leaders from diverse backgrounds in different generations. They were political and spiritual leaders, Jewish and Gentile leaders, godly and sinful leaders, and male and female leaders. Despite the diversity in these leaders, Scripture clearly states that God ordains all human authorities, and He alone has the power to promote or demote human leaders according to His divine will and purpose (Num 27:16-17; Dan 2:21; Rom 13:1). Consequently, leadership is a gift from God endowed upon anyone He chooses so that no one can boast about his or her power

or authority. Furthermore, God expects people to honor all human authorities ordained by Him, for "whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves" (v. 2).

God often chose unlikely leaders in the Bible. For instance, He ordained Moses—who was not an eloquent speaker—to persuade Pharoah to free the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt (Exod 4). He chose Gideon, from the weakest clan in Manasseh, to defeat the massive Midianite army with only the trumpets and jars, not swords (Judg 6-7). God also chose people like Matthew, the tax collector, as one of the chosen twelve disciples of Jesus (Matt 9), Timothy, who was half Jewish (Acts 16:1) and became Paul's trusted ministry associate and the spiritual leader of Ephesian church despite his young age, and Priscilla, a tent-making exile from Rome, who ministered alongside Paul and her husband (Acts 18). Besides these individuals, God chose numerous other unlikely leaders to carry out His will.

In the Old Testament (OT), God appointed leaders through specific family lineages as seen in the Levitical priesthood (Num 3) or various kings chosen by God Himself (1 Sam 9:16; 16:1; 1 Kgs 11:30-38). Everett Ferguson notes, "[T]he divine choice was determinative for positions of leadership in Israel."[1] Hence, God's intimate or direct involvement in selecting specific leaders for Israel is biblically normative.

Meanwhile, God also allowed Israel to choose their first human king for themselves—King Saul, who came after Samuel, the last judge of Israel (1 Sam 8)—even though their request angered Him by frustrating His original intent. Despite Israel's willful disobedience and lack of

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[1] Everett Ferguson, "Ordain, Ordination," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freeman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 38.

loyalty, God still divinely intervened in the selection process through casting lots (1 Sam 10:20-21) and chose the first human leader for them (v. 24).

In the New Testament (NT), Jesus serves as the source of divine leadership appointment as demonstrated in His selection of the twelve disciples (Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16). His disciples still practiced casting lots, however, to discern divine ordination when electing leaders. For instance, when the disciples of Jesus recommended two names to replace Judas as part of the twelve disciples, they cast lots between Matthias and Justus (Acts 1:23-26). More importantly, they sought God's will through prayer before they cast lots (v. 24-25), which supports the notion that God alone ordains all leaders regardless of human participation in the process.

Therefore, the Bible confirms that leadership is not merited but divinely endowed by God. Ferguson also affirms that "Christian ordination put its emphasis on the divine choice of ministers for the Church, a choice mediated by prophetic utterance or by selection by the people."[2] It also records that all leaders stand accountable to Him for their undeserved gift of authority and power (Luke 12:48; Heb 13:17) so that no one can boast about their leadership (1 Cor 1:26-31; 3:21). Andrew Clarke argues that such humility is one of the hallmarks of godly leadership demonstrated through exemplary lifestyle and obedience to God.[3] He further notes that "[s]piritual leaders in both the OT and NT were often noted not only for their seeking of God's will, but also for their ability to teach or communicate."[4] Therefore, when God ordains

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[2] Ferguson, "Ordain, Ordination," 39.

[3] Andrew D. Clarke, "Leadership," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Desmond Alexander T. and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 637.

[4] Ibid., 638.

leaders, He expects them to obey not only the call to ministerial leadership but also the accompanying responsibilities of teaching, preaching, and discipling.

Indeed, many biblical leaders such as elders, judges, prophets, priests, apostles, and disciples humbly used their voices to lead, equip, and disciple others. None of them led in silence. Instead, they all used God-given voices to lead, teach, and speak on His behalf, including some women such as Deborah and Huldah in the OT and Junia and Priscilla in the NT. Numerous biblical accounts prove that God is the source of leadership of both genders.

Gender equality in leadership

In Genesis 1-2, upon creating Adam and Eve in His image, God equally blessed *them* and commanded *them* to be fruitful, multiply, subdue the earth, and rule over the Creation (Gen 1:27-28). Barbara Yoder argues that the image of God (i.e., *imago Dei*) does not refer to His physical traits but rather His innate value, characteristics, and authority over the Creation.[5] Richard Hess also notes that a primary responsibility of God's image-bearers is to represent His divine name and authority on earth, just as the Ancient Near Eastern kings ruled over their territories through the engraved images of themselves in their absence.[6] Furthermore, according to Thomas Finley, the divine task of image-bearing—equally endowed upon Adam and Eve—denotes God's desire to exert His leadership influence through all humanity regardless of gender. Both complementarian and egalitarian scholars agree that men and women are equal in their innate

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[5] Barbara J. Yoder, ed., *Mantled with Authority: God's Apostolic Mandate to Women* (Colorado Springs: Wagner Publications, 2003), 47.

[6] Richard S. Hess, "Equality with and without Innocence: Genesis 1-3," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed., ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 81.

value as people made in God's image, although they believe in fixed gender-exclusive functions or roles.[7]

However, Deborah Gill and Barbara Cavaness argue that when Adam and Eve sinned through their disobedience (Gen 3), that act distorted God's original plan of equality, mutuality, and unity of humanity, resulting in the hierarchy between men and women.[8] Prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve were equal in their value, identity, and function as God's image-bearers. They also received the mutual command or shared responsibility to rule over the earth, but sin disrupted God's ideals. Consequently, the submission of women to men's will and authority became part of God's divine punishment (v. 16).

Complementarian view often refers to the Genesis account as evidence of men's authority over women. The prevalent patriarchal culture throughout the Bible seems to support the complementarian view by recording more examples of male leaders than female leaders. But such a disproportionately low representation of female leaders does not negate the fact that God intentionally elected and elevated women to leadership positions. He mentioned many of them by name against the patriarchal culture as they fulfilled the roles of judge, prophet, teacher, and spiritual leader alongside—not in the absence of—men.[9] Moreover, God divinely established a national celebration called *Purim* to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from the evil scheme of Haman through strategic influence of Queen Esther, a brave Jewish woman married to a Persian king (Esth 9).

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[7] Thomas Finley, "The Relationship of Woman and Man in the Old Testament," in *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective*, ed. Robert Saucy and Judith TenElshof (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 70.

[8] Deborah M. Gill and Barbara L. Cavaness, *God's Women: Then and Now* (Colorado Springs: Authentic Books, 2009), 43.

[9] Ibid., 53.

While Esther may not have had followers, she fulfilled every essential quality of spiritual leadership: discipline, vision, wisdom, decision, courage, humility, integrity, and sincerity.[10] Indeed, a royal position does not automatically birth a leader. But it does indicate a positional power to influence the mass as evidenced by the wise men's concern about the impact of Queen Vasthi's negative example on the Persian and Median women (Esth 1). Hence, God chose godly women, including those who led from unconventional seats like Esther, to play significant leadership roles in His redemptive plan throughout the Bible. Their consistent presence within the patriarchal context reflects His intentionality on gender-inclusive leadership.

A women's place in leadership was much more restrictive and atypical in the OT than in the NT. For instance, the office of priesthood in the OT was exclusively reserved for men from the tribe of Levi.[11] The selection of high priests was even more exclusive as they were the descendants of Aaron, who was a Levite. As spiritual leaders, they oversaw various tabernacle or temple rituals throughout the year while entering the holy of holies once a year on the Day of Atonement for the forgiveness of sins of all Israel (Lev 16; Heb 9:7). However, when the temple was destroyed in AD 70, the Levitical priesthood ended abruptly.[12] Without the temple, the priests and Levites could no longer function as spiritual leaders by observing sacrificial rituals as God originally prescribed. But through His divine ordination, the temple's destruction solidified gender-inclusive spiritual leadership, which was inaugurated by Jesus on the cross and fully activated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4).

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[10] J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer, (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 59-75.

[11] Men between ages of twenty-five to fifty were qualified to serve as the Levites according to Numbers 8:24-25. Numbers 18 describes the duties of priests and Levites.

[12] Paul Ellingworth, "Priests," in New Dictionary of Biblical Theology, ed. Alexander T. Dismond and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 700.

In the NT, Jesus redefined a new and improved temple through His body (John 2:19-21). He was also the new high priest of all believers (Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-5:10; 6:20; 7:11-8:2; 10:12) *and* the perfect atoning sacrifice to purify and forgive all humanity once and for all (Heb 9:11-14, 23-28). Jesus was the temple, the high priest, and the sacrifice simultaneously. The complexity of His divine nature completely disoriented and transformed the meaning of spiritual leadership. In addition, various Scriptures support that this Jesus, the embodied temple and priesthood, indwells in all believers (John 15:1; Eph 3:7; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20; Col 1:27). Hence, spiritual leadership is evidence of His presence in those who follow, serve, and worship Him.

The NT further expands the concept of spiritual leadership by ascribing the office of priesthood to *all* believers (1 Pet 2:5, 9) who offer acceptable sacrifices to God through worship and faithful devotion to the work of the ministry (Heb 13:15-16). Such an inclusive language in these passages shows no gender preference regarding spiritual authority. The term "all believers" encompasses both men and women, indicating that spiritual authority is not limited to men. Such a new leadership paradigm resonates with 1 Samuel 16:7, which shows how God examines one's heart over appearance—i.e., physical stature or biological traits—as the basis of leadership qualification.

Gender-inclusive leadership is not a NT idea as its origin goes back to the creation account in Genesis. Although the sin of Adam and Eve initially marred God's original plan, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all humanity (Acts 2:17-18) restored the broken leadership dynamics as a fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29: "I will pour out my Spirit on *all* people. Your *sons and daughters* will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, *both men and women*, I will pour out my Spirit in those days" (emphasis

added).[13] Stanley Horton argues that the term "all people" (v.17) demonstrated "no distinction in the Pentecostal experience with regard to gender."[14] Therefore, the outpouring of the Spirit empowers both men and women to do the work of ministry according to God's divine purpose.

The purpose of Spirit-empowerment is to enable believers to boldly testify about Jesus Christ locally, regionally, and globally as instructed by the Lord immediately before His ascension (Acts 1:8). Witnessing requires public proclamation about God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ. Robert Maccini defines witnessing or testifying as a decisive verbal declaration of "one's beliefs about, and relationship with, the person of Jesus Christ."[15] He also notes that the term witness in Greek (*martys*), from which the English word *martyr* derived, contains the idea of dying for the cause of Christ.[16] Hence, when these men and women gathered on the Day of Pentecost and received the power of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, God expected them to publicly prophesy and teach about His redemptive work through Jesus to the point of death. No gender was exempt from such a high calling.

Wayne Grudem describes prophecy as "the most common means God used to communicate with people throughout biblical history,"[17] although his complementarian position excludes women from publicly teaching God's Word to men. Harold Mare describes the primary role of a biblical prophet as speaking, interpreting, or communicating God's divine will to all

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[13] Acts 2:18 ends with an additional phrase, "and they will prophesy."

[14] Stanley M. Horton, *Acts Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2001), 68.

[15] Robert G. Maccini, "Testimony/Witness," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Desmond Alexander T. and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 813.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Wayne A. Grudem, "Prophecy, Prophets," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Desmond Alexander T. and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 701.

humanity.[18] The OT records many names of both male and female prophets, with Malachi being the last. However, God continued to appoint and empower various prophets in the NT as active participants in His redemptive work. Some of the notable NT prophets include John the Baptist (Matt 14:5; 21:26; Mark 11:32; Luke 1:76, 20:6); Anna, the daughter of Penuel from the tribe of Asher, who prophesied about the redemption through Jesus before his birth (Luke 2:36); and even Jezebel, the false prophetess from Thyatira (Rev 2:18-20). Many who witnessed divine miracles and teachings of Jesus also considered Him a prophet (Matt 16:14; Mark 6:15; 8:28; Luke 9:19, 24:19; John 4:19; 6:14; 7:40). As such, the NT continues to normalize the verbal and public prophetic function of both men and women.

Prophecy is one of the spiritual gifts, often listed with the gifts of teaching, preaching, and leading. According to the Apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit distributes various spiritual gifts to all God's children for mutual edification (Rom 12:3-8; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Cor 12:4-11). Moreover, none of his teachings on spiritual gifts prohibited women from receiving certain gifts based on gender. Instead, these passages indicate that the source of spiritual gifts is God, and He distributes them equally to all believers as He sees fit.

Furthermore, Paul supported the equality and mutuality of spiritual leadership of all humanity by breaking down a hierarchy between all human relationships (Gal 3:28). Paul's letter to the Galatians focused on salvation by faith in Christ Jesus alone, not by works. It was written in response to the legalistic Judaizers, who burdened Gentile Christians by imposing strict adherence to the Jewish law and tradition. Gordon Fee argues that since Paul defined God's new creational order by uniting men and women (or husbands and wives) as siblings in Christ with one purpose and mission, "either may prophesy or teach (1 Cor 14:26)—which are matters of

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[18] W. Harold Mare, "Prophet and Teacher in the New Testament Period," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 9, no. 3 (1966): 139.

Spirit gifting, not gender."[19] Hence, God equally calls and commissions all humanity for His

redemptive work so that all members of His family can equally serve, lead, teach, preach, and

make disciples of all nations in every generation.

In contrast, complementarian scholars such as John Piper and Wayne Grudem believe it

is unbiblical and detrimental for women to assume spiritual leadership as pastors and elders and

consider male headship in the home and the church as a timeless biblical principle.[20] Lewis

Johnson, Jr. agrees that Galatians 3:28 is insufficient to support egalitarian ecclesial leadership

for its immediate context deals with "an egalitarianism of privilege in the covenantal union of

believers in Christ."[21] In other words, complementarianism argues that the Galatian passage

emphatically highlights the unity of men and women as God's children by breaking down the

barriers between all human relationships (i.e., different ethnicities, social classes, and genders)

without alluding to gender equality in spiritual leadership.

The complementarian view also affirms primary male leadership by validating the

creational order (i.e., Adam was made first before Eve) and the role of Eve as a helper in Genesis

2.[22] However, Linda Belleville notes that such argument is unsubstantiated since the same

Hebrew word describes God as the Helper for Israel or anyone who seeks His divine rescue (e.g.,

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[19] Gordon D. Fee, "Male and Female in the New Creation," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed., ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 184.

[20] John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "An Overview of Central Concerns: Questions and Answers," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 60, 65.

[21] S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "Role Distinctions in the Church," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 164.

[22] John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "An Overview of Central Concerns," 81, 87.

1 Sam 7:12; Ps 121:1-2). [23] According to Hess, the Bible refutes the creational order by repeatedly recording the names of influential leaders that are not the firstborn such as Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc. [24] Hence, the argument that automatically disqualifies women from leadership based on the creational order is counter-biblical. Unlike complementarianism that promotes equal value yet different functions of men and women, egalitarianism asserts that all people are equal in their value *and* functions. As proponents of female ministers, Loren Cunningham and David Hamilton claim that the absence of women in ministerial leadership significantly hinders the Great Commission (Matt 28:19), the direct command from Jesus Christ given to all believers before His ascension.[25] They believe that gender inequality in spiritual leadership is the devil's intentional attack against all God's image-bearers and fuels pride in men while promoting fear and oppression among women.[26]

Egalitarian leadership challenged

Complementarianism promotes women's submission to men and prevent them from exercising spiritual leadership over men, specifically through teaching and preaching by quoting 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. However, since these texts do not reflect God's original plan before the Fall or the biblical metanarrative, it remains imperative to examine these passages in light of the broader biblical context.

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[23] Linda L. Belleville, "Women in Ministry," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, ed. James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 27-28.

[24] Ibid., 84.

[25] Loren Cunningham, David Joel Hamilton, and Janice Rogers, *Why Not Women: A Biblical Study of Women in Missions, Ministry, and Leadership*, 1st ed. (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2000), 15.

[26] Ibid., 16-17.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35. When read independently, this passage seems to restrict women from speaking publicly in all churches while promoting their silence and submission to men, especially their husbands. It reads: "Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church."[27]

To make this mandate universal, complementarian scholar, D. A. Carson, combines the latter half of the previous verse as part of the exegesis of verse 34, which reads: "As in all the congregations of the Lord's people, women should remain silent in the churches."[28] However, the first half of verse 33 provides an important overarching theme for the entire chapter that Carson ignores, which focuses on the order and peace in worship service patterned after God's character, who is "not a God of disorder but of peace" (v. 33a). By readjusting the demarcation of verse 33, Carson tries to elevate the issue of silencing women in the churches over keeping peace and order in other equally problematic situations.

Cunningham and Hamilton observe a deliberate repetition of the same command, using the same Greek word to remain silent, addressed to three different groups among the Corinthian believers.[29] These groups included individuals with a gift of tongues (vv. 27-28), others with a gift of prophecy (vv. 29-30), and women in their churches (34-35) who demonstrated disorderly conduct due to the lack of theological understanding.

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[27] All Scripture references, unless noted otherwise, are from the New International Version (NIV).

[28] D. A. Carson, "'Silent in the Churches': On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem, redesign ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 140.

[29] Cunningham, Hamilton, and Rogers, *Why Not Women*, 195.

Table 2.1 Command of Silence in 1 Corinthians 14

Targeted Audience	Repeated Prohibition	Meaning in Greek[30]
Anyone with a gift of tongues (v.27)	Should keep *quiet* (v. 28)	*sigato* (third-person singular): translated as to be silent or stop speaking
Anyone with a gift of prophecy (v. 29)	Should *stop* (v. 30)	*sigato*
Women in *the* churches (v. 34); a definite article indicates the instruction was for specific churches in Corinth	Should remain *silent* (v. 34)	*sigatosan* (third person plural)

Verses 27-28 read, "If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God." The immediate context of this command focuses on reducing chaos by providing helpful guidelines to manifesting verbal spiritual gifts in an orderly manner during church service. Indeed, Paul was not prohibiting all believers from speaking in tongues since he claimed earlier that he was the most devout tongue-speaker of all (v.18). Hence, when he urged them to keep quiet in verse 28, he was not making a universal or timeless prohibition. Moreover, he explicitly stated not to forbid speaking in tongues a few verses later (v. 39b). Paul was a proponent of speaking in tongues, but he also wanted the Corinthian believers to exercise a gift of interpretation for order and mutual edification.

In verses 29-30, Paul gave a similar conditional prohibition to remain silent to the believers with a gift of prophecy: "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop." As in the previous verses, the prohibition against speaking was not a timeless principle since Paul encouraged all Corinthian believers to "be eager to prophesy" in the same chapter (v. 39a).

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[30] Rick Brannan, "Σιγάτω," *The English-Greek Reverse Interlinear New Testament New International Version (2011)* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Logos Bible Software.

Meanwhile, Carson argues that while women may prophesy according to 1 Corinthians 11:15, they cannot "participate in the oral weighing of such prophecies."[31] Craig Keener disagrees by referencing the absence of textual evidence that specifically prohibits women from weighing or "judging prophecies."[32] Carson's double standard on women's role in prophetic ministry—i.e., permissible when prophesying but forbidden from interpreting—only weakens his argument. Furthermore, he wrongfully assumed that the issue of disorderly prophetic ministry was directed only toward women when the passage does not support such a claim.

Moreover, Paul consistently used the Greek word *adelphoi* to address the "sibling believers" in Christ in many of his letters.[33] Of the twenty-two times *adelphoi* is used in the Bible, it appears most frequently in 1 Corinthians. In fact, the whole letter was written to the entire assembly of "brothers and sisters" or *adelphoi* in Corinth, evidenced by his references in his opening statement (1:11) and final greetings in (16:20). It is highly unlikely that Paul singled out women in the middle of his letter while addressing both men and women throughout the letter. Thus, Paul's intention was not to prevent women from prophesying or interpreting prophecies but simply to teach the Corinthian church how to conduct themselves in an orderly fashion to prevent future disruption or disorderliness.

Interestingly, verses 34-35 are the only passages among the deliberate three-part series of silence or *sigato* in chapter 14 that specifically address the women. Unlike the previous two passages that provided specific guidelines to resolve disorderly exercises of the gifts of tongues,

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[31] Carson, "'Silent in the Churches'," 151.

[32] Craig S. Keener, "Learning in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 161.

[33] Joseph Henry Thayer, "Ἀδελφός," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1889), Logos Bible Software.

interpretation of tongues, and prophecy, these passages do not provide a clear solution. At first glance, it appears that women's submission to men according to the law (v. 34) is a transcultural and transgenerational mandate. Complementarianism argues that the word law or *nomos* refers to the prescriptive subordination of women based on Genesis 3:16, while egalitarian view interprets the same text as a descriptive outcome of sin.[34]

However, given the patriarchal culture in the Ancient Near East, Keener claims that Paul's instruction on women's silence in the churches was a culturally appropriate response to disorderliness caused by uneducated women—often much younger than their husbands with no education past their mid-teens.[35] He further argues that the term law or *nomos* refers to the broader social expectation (cf. the *Torah*) that normalized women's or wives' subordination to men or husbands in the Greco-Roman culture.[36] In the first century, women did not have as many educational opportunities as men, nor could they speak with men other than those related to their families as a "matter of propriety."[37] Despite such cultural limitations or norms, Paul intentionally created a pathway for women to learn by urging them to ask questions to their husbands at home so they could preserve order and peace in God's house.

Therefore, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 fails to justify women's subordination as a timeless principle that transcends all cultures and generations. If this was Paul's proposition, it would severely contradict his teachings in other places in the NT that support and encourage women's active ministry participation alongside men by utilizing their spiritual gifts for the mutual

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[34] Cunningham, Hamilton, and Rogers, *Why Not Women*, 200.

[35] Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 119.

[36] Keener, "Learning in the Assemblies," 170.

[37] Ibid.

edification of all believers. As noted in verses 26 and 40, Paul's primary concern was keeping

orderly conduct in all areas of worship and ministry to build up the Church. Gill and Cavaness

rightly conclude that Paul's instruction on women's silence was contingent upon their continual

or disruptive talking in the church.[38] Still, another passage seems to support the complementarian

view on silence and subordination of women in the church.

1 Timothy 2:11-12. Paul penned this letter to his spiritual son, Timothy, to offer pastoral counsel

on how believers ought to respond to false teaching and conduct themselves in the Ephesian

church. Throughout the letter, Paul addressed various issues concerning women, such as their

modesty in appearance and behavior, proper relationship dynamics with older and younger

women, and other matters related to widows of all ages. Linda Belleville notes that "Paul's

attention to false teaching and women occupies about 60 percent of the letter."[39] Chapter 2

specifically addresses the congregational tension caused by certain improper behaviors among

believers—both men and women. Verses 11-12 focus on women's conduct in the church, and it

reads: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach

or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet."

Douglas Moo, a complementarian, argues that while Paul allowed women to learn God's

Word against the Jewish tradition or culture, the main point of verses 11-12 was that women

must learn in submission to their husbands and all men in the church.[40] Those who support

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[38] Gill and Cavaness, *God's Women*, 136.

[39] Linda L. Belleville, "Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11-15," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed., ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 207.

[40] Douglas Moo, "What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11-15," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem, redesign ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 183.

exclusive male leadership interpret this passage as a universal and timeless principle. They believe women in all times and places should learn God's Word without exerting any spiritual authority over men through teaching or preaching. Moo further notes that teaching is not always the end goal of learning, as evidenced by the numerous biblical examples of believers who did not assume leadership roles.[41]

On the other hand, Gill and Cavaness disagree with complementarianism that limits women's roles in church leadership. Instead, they argue that the church in Ephesus was already familiar with female leadership as they gathered in the home of Priscilla and Aquila, a ministry couple approved by Paul. Culturally, it was common for the hosts of a house church to provide a place of worship and spiritual leadership for the believers.[42] Acts 18 offers an excellent example as Priscilla and Aquila invited Apollos, an educated Jewish man from Alexandria, Egypt, to their home in Ephesus and corrected his theology in support of his public ministry in the synagogue (vv. 24-26). Since Ephesian believers had a visible and active role model of healthy female leadership through Priscilla, egalitarian view argues that Paul's restriction in verses 11-12 was not a universal mandate. Instead, he intended to address a specific disorderliness caused by some of the uneducated and spiritually immature women in that particular time and place.

Hamilton observes that the phrase "silence and submission" in verse 11 was not a prescription for women's subordinate position to men but a description of a widely accepted attitude of devout scholars of God's Word according to the rabbinic tradition.[43] Aida Spenser notes that first-century Christians believed "only wise people of superior birth" engaged learning

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[41] Ibid., 185.

[42] Gill and Cavaness, *God's Women*, 145.

[43] Cunningham, Hamilton, and Rogers, *Why Not Women*, 218.

in silence as taught in the *Mishna* and the Old Testament (e.g., Ps 17:27-28).[44] Hence, Paul's statement about women learning in silence and submission as a spiritual discipline did not mean to sound derogatory or oppressive. In contrast, he expected women to learn in the same posture as men, who were perceived as wiser and more superior than women in their culture.

Meanwhile, verse 12 poses another challenging thought that seemingly promotes women's subordinate position to men: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet." Some scholars argue that this verse addresses one specific woman based on the singular noun, "a woman." However, the absence of a definite article and the broader audience of the letter do not seem to support that idea. Considering Paul's teachings and affirmations on egalitarian leadership in other letters he wrote (Rom 16:3, 6-7, 12; Phil 4:2-3; Col 4:15), this verse seems to contradict his own belief and practices blatantly.

The Greek word *athentein* (αὐθεντεῖν from the root αὐθεντέω) in verse 12 is often translated as to control, dictate, or exercise authority.[45] It was an unusual term used by Paul to describe authority (cf. ἐξουσία) and appeared only once in the New Testament.[46] While this verse seems to prohibit women from teaching or leading men, Linda Belleville suggests that a better rendering of verse 12 is: "I do not permit a woman *to teach with the intent to domineer over a man*" based on the lexical studies.[47] She also describes the Artemis worship in Ephesus as "a cult that exalted women over men, a goddess who taught men how to hunt wild animals, and a

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[44] Aida Besancon Spencer, "Eve at Ephesus (Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors according to the First Letter to Timothy 2:11-15?)," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17, no. 4 (January 1, 1974): 218.

[45] Joseph Henry Thayer, "Αὐθεντεῖν," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1889), Logos Bible Software.

[46] Cunningham, Hamilton, and Rogers, *Why Not Women*, 221.

[47] Belleville, "Lexical Fallacies in Rendering Αὐθεντεῖν in I Timothy 2:12: BDAG in Light of Greek Literary and Nonliterary Usage," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 29, no. 3 (2019): 341.

Mother-Goddess to whom childbearing women mined for protection."[48] Given this context, it is likely that Paul was correcting certain women who mirrored a domineering attitude of Artemis in the church. More importantly, Paul made this statement in the context of his warning against false teachings and impropriety of men and women in the church. Therefore, it is most likely that Paul was prohibiting some disorderly women who disrupted the house of God through domineering behaviors or false doctrines.

Furthermore, since Paul honored Lois and Eunice—Timothy's grandmother and mother respectively—for passing down their faith to him (2 Tim 1:5), the issues raised in verses 11 and 12 have more to do with correcting the heresies and re-educating women with proper theology by learning "in a quiet demeanor"[49] or listening more. Based on the larger context of 1 Timothy and Paul's overarching approach to egalitarian ministry, the passage in question does not prevent all women from having the honor and privilege of making disciples of all nations, including men and women. Indeed, silence helps prevent heresies. But a verbal declaration of the gospel is a biblical mandate for all people of God as directed by Jesus himself (Matt 28:19; Acts 1:8).

Distorted perception of women

Although God's original desire for men and women was to co-lead, a low view of women was prevalent in the biblical eras. Submission to husbands or male guardians was legalized, which was heightened during the Hellenistic period to preserve the Jewish culture and tradition.[50]

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 13 of *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 73.

[50] Beth Allison Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2021), 46.

Stricter interpretations of the Torah and additional *midrashic* teachings further restricted

women's voices and their influence in public.[51] The pervasive thought that women were evil,

imperfect, or inferior to men is evident in the daily prayer of Jewish men:

> Praise be to God who has not made me a non-Jew.
> Praise be to God who has not made me an ignorant person.
> Praise be to God who has not made me a woman.[52]

Such a negative perception on the women as naturally inferior beings led to questioning their

intelligence or ability to learn.

According to Keener, the limited educational opportunities for women in the Greco-

Roman culture, especially during their upbringings, led to sexism that broadly painted them as

naturally unintelligent or "unable to grasp intellectual ideas."[53] However, the lack of

opportunities did not mean the absence of female students. Aida Spencer noted that Rabbi

Gamaliel taught his daughter, Imma Shalom (in the first century AD), while Beruria, the wife of

Rabbi Meir, received three years of rabbinical training (in the second century AD).[54] As such, the

formal study of the Torah was readily available to anyone who wished to learn.

However, even though the Law (Deut 31:12; Josh 8:35) required Israel to gather all men,

women, children, and even foreigners in town so they could listen and learn God's Word, the

patriarchal culture frequently favored men by adding a prohibiting clause as written in the

Talmud: "Our Rabbis taught: All are qualified to be among the seven [who read], even a minor

and a woman, only the Sages said that a woman should not read in the Torah out of respect for

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[51] Gill and Cavaness, *God's Women*, 63.

[52] Hayim H. Donin, *To Pray as a Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 194.

[53] Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 119.

[54] Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 47.

the congregation."[55] Therefore, while the Law allowed women's active participation in learning and reading of the text, their culture considered it rude, disrespectful, or inappropriate. Although women had the legal right, they could not freely exercise it.

Consequently, fewer women took advantage of learning—not because they did not want to but because they were exempt from the necessity to learn Torah so they would not neglect their responsibilities at home. Meanwhile, men received the honor in the synagogue for their active participation in spiritual disciplines. Such a broken system perpetuated the exclusion of women from learning, which disqualified them even more from teaching. Furthermore, women in the Ancient Near East had nearly no rights to own property, business, or conduct any legal or financial matters without their male guardians acting on their behalf.[56] Although God invited all Israel to learn His Word and teach the next generation (Deut 6:7; 11:19), the sin of humanity distorted the value of women against God's original plan.

The idea that women are less than men in nature, status, or ability was also prevalent among church fathers, whose thoughts were heavily influenced by the complementarian hermeneutical lens. For instance, Tertullian (AD 160-230) viewed women as the originator of sin and the cause of death and described them as "the devil's gateway" and "the first deserter of the divine law," therefore, unfit for spiritual leadership. [57] Augustine (AD 354-430) believed Satan intentionally chose Eve to commit the first sin since she was "the weaker part of [the] human alliance and more gullible to deception, temptation, and sin than Adam.[58] Epiphanius (AD 365-

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[55] Rav Chaim Navon, "Shiur #06: Public Torah Reading by Women," last modified December (10, 2014, VBM (Virtual *Beit Midrash*), accessed October 12, 2020, https://torah.etzion.org.il/en/shiur-06-public-torah-reading-women.

[56] Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, 46.

[57] A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 4, *Tertullian, On the Apparel of Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eedmans, 1972 Rep. [1885], I.1:14.

403) believed women were "easily mistaken, fallible, and poor in intelligence,"[59] Thomas

Aquinas (AD 1225-1274) taught that women are subordinate to men by nature since men are

more rational thinkers,[60] Martin Luther (AD 1483-1546) argued that men have more authority

than women because Adam was wiser than Eve in the Garden and her susceptibility to sin is an

enduring nature of women,[61] and John Wesley (AD 1703-1791) agreed with the previous church

fathers and argued women should not usurp authority over men since Eve was easily deceived by

Satan and easily deceived Adam.[62]

In addition, Aristotle, the fourth-century philosopher, believed equality between men and

women was intrinsically and eternally impossible.[63] A modern theologian, John Kelly (1909-

1997), echoed his sentiment by asserting that Eve's sin serves as a permanent disqualifier for

women to teach.[64] Unfortunately, their collective voice resonates with complementarianism that

constantly rejects women as spiritual leaders solely based on their gender while disqualifying

them from roles of teaching and preaching, especially over men.

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[58] Augustine, "City of God," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Gathers of the Christian Church*, 1st series, ed. Phillip Schaff (1886: reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman, 1977), 2:272.

[59] Epiphanius, "Medicine Box 79", in *Maenads, Martyrs, Matrons, Monastics: A Sourcebook on Women's Religious in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Ross S. Kraemer (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 51.

[60] Thomas Aquinas, "Man Made to God's Image," in *Summa Theologica*, ed. Thomas Gilby and T. C. Gilby, trans. Edmund Hill, (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1963-1974), 13:37-39.

[61] Martin Luther, "Lecture on 1 Timothy," in *Luther's Works*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1973), 28:278-79.

[62] John Wesley, "1 Timothy," in *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*, ed. G. Roger Schoenhals (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980), 6:600.

[63] Aristotle, *Politics*, in *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*, 4th ed., ed. Mary R Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, (London: Bloombury, 2016), 64.

[64] William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 268.

Contrary to the historically negative view on women's value and function as spiritual authority, several biblical accounts of exceptional female leaders demonstrate that "many biblical passages and stories undermine, rather than support, patriarchy."[65] The Bible also records a few unconventional men, noted in the subsequent section of this chapter, who elevated "women in status and rights" throughout God's redemptive story.[66] According to Beth Barr, their countercultural examples challenged Roman masculinity ideals and disrupted the patriarchal culture.[67] Despite the enduring effort to exclude women from spiritual leadership roles, the selected stories of courageous female leaders and their supportive counterparts demonstrate just how God employed them both as His vessels to reflect His original intent of gender-inclusive leadership.[68]

Following are the stories of courageous women in the Bible who answered the call to ministerial leadership despite the patriarchal culture in which they lived. God ordained these women to lead alongside men as they remained faithful to His mission of redeeming their nation or people according to His divine will and purpose.

Female leaders and their male allies/advocates in the Bible

Despite the patriarchal culture that minimized the value of women and their roles throughout the Bible, God employed several key women to play essential roles in His divine redemptive story. According to Lindsay Hardin Freeman, there are eighty-six women in the Bible—both named

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[65] Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, 36.

[66] Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals*, 76.

[67] Barr, 54.

[68] George Murray Winston and Dora Winston, *Recovering Biblical Ministry by Women: An Exegetical Response to Traditionalism and Feminism* (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2003), 40.

and unnamed from diverse ethnic, cultural, language, and socio-economic backgrounds—who spoke with divine authority and power given by the Holy Spirit against their cultural norm.[69] Some women even served in prominent, visible leadership alongside men both in the Old and New Testaments.

Some of the notable OT female leaders include Miriam—the prophetess of the Exodus who served alongside her brother, Moses; Deborah—the judge and prophetess over Israel; Huldah—the prophetess and reformer; and Esther—the Jewish-Persian queen, who played a vital role in rescuing the entire nation of Israel from genocide. Some scholars argue that the presence of strong female leaders in the Bible was an exception to the rule as God's divine provision during the absence of male spiritual leaders. "But the examples of Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah, who ministered in the context of other renowned male figures (i.e., Moses, Barak, and Josiah), demonstrate the opposite."[70] Hence, the female leaders in the OT were not serving in default. Instead, God intentionally chose them to fulfill specific tasks for His mission and glory. While God anoints every leader under heaven, women in the Bible who lived in a patriarchal culture could not fully exercise their spiritual authority without men paving the way. Following are the exceptional examples of five male allies who valued, honored, and normalized the spiritual authority of women as an integral part of God's redemptive work: Barak (political leader), Hilkiah (spiritual leader), Aquila (husband), Paul (ministry colleague), and Jesus (shepherd). Their countercultural allying or advocating practices will set a theological-biblical foundation for male champions who intentionally engage in *ongoing* cross-gender training,

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[69] Lindsay Hardin Freeman, *Bible Women: All Their Words and Why They Matter* (Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 2014), 11.

[70] Linda L. Belleville, "Women Leaders in the Bible," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed., ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 113.

empowering, advocating/affirming, and mentoring opportunities to advance women called to ministry.

Deborah and her ally, Barak, a dependent political leader. Deborah was the only female judge out of the twelve. As a spiritual, political, and military leader, her charismatic leadership stood out among the Old Testament judges. Lillian Klein accurately describes her as an "anomaly."[71] By the time her name appears in Judges 4:4, she is already leading as an established judge, and the Israelites had suffered twenty-year-long oppression under the Canaanites due to their disobedience and sin against the Lord. At the opportune time, God prompted her to initiate a conversation with Barak, a military commander, to free their nation from the oppressors. While the OT patriarchal culture limited women's roles in public spheres, God intentionally appointed Deborah to lead the entire nation through her exceptional courage, wisdom, and spiritual authority, unlike other women of her time.[72]

The story of Deborah in Judges 4 and 5 highlights her unique multi-roles as God's mouthpiece, the wife of Lappidoth (4:4), and a mother (5:7).[73] But no one gives a second thought to her husband, whose name was mentioned only once in the entire Bible with no other clues about his background. Given the Jewish patriarchal culture, mentioning Lappidoth in passing as the husband of Deborah—the most powerful Jewish leader of their day—demonstrates that he was confident in his supportive role for his wife's public ministry against the cultural norm.

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[71] Lillian R. Klein, *From Deborah to Esther: Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 33.

[72] Freeman, *Bible Women*, 118.

[73] Scholars debate whether Deborah was a literal mother of a biological child or a symbolic mother of her nation. Either way, her outstanding role as a mature woman in the Lord while wearing other hats for public service is noteworthy since it contradicts a typical Jewish woman's life.

Moreover, the absence of his oppositional voice is sufficient to deduce that he recognized God's anointing upon his wife, supported her divine calling, and even submitted to her spiritual authority as the God-appointed spiritual leader of Israel.

Barak was another male figure in her story who affirmed her spiritual leadership. He was a military commander from the northern region of Naphtali, who demonstrated co-dependence on Deborah when she summoned and commanded him with authority given by God to destroy King Jabin's army under the command of Sisera (4:1-7). The words dependence and military leader do not typically go together, but when Deborah charges Barak with God's command to conquer their enemy in chapter 4, he responds with complete dependence by asking her to accompany him to the battlefield (4:8). Relying on a Spirit-led, proven female leader does not make him less of a leader, nor does it make Deborah God's second choice. Even a complementarian theologian, Thomas Finley, notes that while Deborah's leadership was unusual, it was not out of order because God "sanctioned" her leadership over Israel when everyone did evil in God's eyes.[74]

While complementarianism argues that the selection of Deborah was an alternate to the lack of strong male leadership, a careful reading of Judges 4 demonstrates that she was already in the position of influence as a prophetess and a judge over Israel. Considering the patriarchal and hierarchal Jewish culture, Barak's affirmative response to Deborah's leadership was certainly countercultural. Yet, his vulnerability and reliance on her demonstrated two things: his self-awareness of doubt and inability and his complete trust in "the power behind Deborah's voice."[75]

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[74] Thomas Finley, "The Ministry of Women in the Old Testament," in *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective*, ed. Robert Saucy and Judith TenElshof (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 80.

[75] Lillian R. Klein, *From Deborah to Esther*, 35.

Although he knows that the honor of victory would not be his (4:9), he still chooses to fight the battle with a woman of God by his side who embodies God's presence and power.

Barak is an excellent example of a male ally who willingly collaborated with a female leader through his dependence and reliance on her to save an entire nation. If Barak had rejected Deborah's words because of her gender, he would have faced permanent defeat, and Israel would have been destroyed completely. Humility in knowing his weakness, however, coupled with his desperation for God's divine intervention, allowed Barak to depend on Deborah confidently. Their story beautifully illustrates the decisive move of God when an influential male leader recognizes a divine anointing on a person and fully depends on his or her wisdom.

Huldah and her ally, Hilkiah, an intentional spiritual leader. Second Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34 tell the story of Huldah, the wife of King Josiah's wardrobe keeper and the only prophetess mentioned in the monarchical period.[76] Not much is known about her husband, Shallum, other than that he was the son of Tikvah (2 Kgs 22:14) or Tokhath (2 Chr 34:22) and that he worked in the palace. Some scholars such as Ruth Tucker even argue it was Shallum's grandfather who was the wardrobe keeper, not him.[77] Either way, Huldah married an obscure man with no ministry background.

Josiah became a king at the age of eight and reigned over Judah for thirty-one years in Jerusalem and "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord," just as his father, King David, did (2 Kgs 22:2; 2 Chr 34:2). Josiah was a God-fearing man and initiated the restoration of the

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[76] Joseph L. Gardner, ed., *Who's Who in the Bible* (Pleasantville, NY: Readers Digest, 1994), 159.

[77] Ruth Tucker, *Dynamic Women of the Bible: What We Can Learn from Their Surprising Stories* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 188.

Jerusalem temple. During the renovation, Hilkiah, the high priest, discovered the Book of the Law, which his secretary read to the king. Upon hearing about the disobedience and sins of his ancestors against God, the deeply grieved king instructed Hilkiah to inquire of the Lord for His wisdom and guidance. What Hilkiah did next was quite unusual yet intentional. He paved the way for Huldah to play a crucial role in evoking national revival (2 Kgs 22:8-20; 2 Chr 34:8-28).

At that time, prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah were ministering actively in Judah.[78] As a high priest, Hilkiah could have easily chosen one of these male prophets to aid King Josiah for divine guidance. Instead, he went to Huldah, the wife of a low-ranking temple official. Many scholars believe that she was the first to authenticate the text as the "Holy Scripture" discovered at the construction site.[79] The Bible does not explain the rationale behind this decision. Nevertheless, God compelled Hilkiah to choose Huldah among other prophets to reform Judah through corporate repentance.

Huldah did not gain her leadership voice as a result of her marriage to an influential man or through a political campaign. Rather, God divinely appointed her to speak on His behalf in Jerusalem, the city where the temple stood, and many political and spiritual leaders gathered. It was also where Huldah resided, which made her easily accessible to the king. King Josiah did not command Hilkiah to seek Huldah for divine insight but took her prophetic warnings seriously and led people to repentance and redemption. Although he was a godly man, he was not the most significant ally or advocate for Huldah. Instead, it was Hilkiah because he intentionally chose her among other prophets to receive God's divine wisdom and guidance. It is also noteworthy that

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[78] Judy L. Brown, *Women Ministers According to Scripture* (Springfield, MO: Morris Publishing, 1996), 102.

[79] Lowell K. Handy, "Huldah the Prophetess," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), Logos Bible Software.

four other men accompanied Hilkiah (2 Kgs 22:14) when he found her, yet none of them questioned the choice of Huldah over Jeremiah or Zephaniah.

Meanwhile, the complementarian view reduces Huldah's spiritual leadership as a "private consultation"[80] and still prohibits godly and educated women from serving as spiritual leaders over men.[81] However, they cannot reconcile the fact that Hilkiah intentionally chose Huldah when other godly and influential male prophets were readily available. Against the argument that views female leaders as necessary replacements for unavailable male leaders, Judy Brown argues that "[Huldah] was not positioned and used by God because competent men were not available. A righteous King, a high priest, two notable prophets, and a contingency of national leaders and temple officials were all available."[82] Hilkiah's intentional decision to inquire of God through Huldah makes him a great example of a male ally who purposefully invites women to use their God-given gifts for His divine redemptive plan.

The NT also records stories of faithful women who actively participated in God's Kingdom work in a male-dominated culture. Women like Phoebe (Rom 16:1), Priscilla (Rom 16:3), Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3l), and Junia (Rom 16:7) were considered co-laborers or ministry colleagues by Paul. He even referred to some women as deacons and apostles, the titles typically reserved for men in the NT. While women were not part of the twelve apostles chosen from a larger group of disciples (Luke 6:13-16), the prominence of the Jewish-male-centric leadership dissipated after Acts 6 as Gentiles and women joined the work of the ministry to meet

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[80] Piper and Grudem, "An Overview of Central Concerns," 72.

[81] William Weinrich, "Women in the History of the Church: Learned and Holy, But Not Pastors," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 275.

[82] Brown, *Women Ministers According to Scripture*, 102.

the growing physical and spiritual needs of the early churches. [83] Gilbert Bilezikian observes that

Jesus' exclusive selection of the twelve Jewish men was intentional to effectively reach the Jews

first (Matt 10:5-8) in the first phase of His redemptive mission.[84] But such an exclusive

apostleship was no longer necessary as the Gentile mission began to unfold in the remaining part

of the NT. Throughout Paul's missionary journeys, many women fulfilled various leadership

roles during the Early Church history as Spirit-empowered fellow prisoners and co-laborers by

risking their lives alongside men to accomplish the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19.[85] The

following are the stories of two exceptional female leaders, Priscilla and Junia, who shared the

joys and pains of ministry alongside their male counterparts.

Priscilla and her ally, Aquila, a supportive husband. Six times in the Bible, the names of Aquila

and Priscilla (or Prisca) appear side by side joined by the conjunction "and" (Acts 18:18, 19, 26;

Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). In all cases except in 1 Corinthians, Priscilla's name

precedes her husband's name. While some scholars argue that her wealth and social status gave

her the precedence, Murphy-O' Conner disagrees since a wealthy and noble woman would not

have to work, let alone a heavy needle job such as tent-making. [86] Noting the practice of placing

a wife's name before her husband's as "highly unusual in antiquity," Fee concludes that Pricilla

played a more significant role in their ministry and leadership.[87]

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[83] John P. Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve: Did it Exist during Jesus' Public Ministry?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116, no. 4 (1997): 640, 670.

[84] Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 76.

[85] Fee, "Male and Female in the New Creation," 124.

[86] VanThanh Nguyen, "Migrants as Missionaries: The Case of Priscilla and Aquila," *Mission Studies* 30, no. 2 (2013): 200.

[87] Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 249-250.

As a powerful collaborative team, this ministry couple hosted Paul when he arrived in Corinth to preach the gospel. They were both tentmakers by trade like Paul (Acts 18:3) and traveled together with him to Ephesus for further ministry. When Paul returned to Jerusalem, Aquila and Priscilla remained in Ephesus to continue their missional work. In Acts 18:26, this ministry couple comes across an educated Jewish man from Alexandria, named Apollos, teaching in a synagogue with much charisma. When they realize his teaching is missing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they invite him to their home to help correct his theology as it was customary for house church leaders to lead theological discussions at home, even though the Jewish law prevented women from teaching men.[88] Chrysostom, a fourth-century church father, affirmed Priscilla as the primary teacher of Apollos and acknowledged her as a pastor of the Corinthian church after Paul's departure.[89]

Aquila and Priscilla were Jewish converts who moved from Italy to Corinth. Despite the literary and archaeological evidences that affirm the work of faithful Christian women and the prominent presence of female goddesses and temple workers in pagan cults during the Greco-Roman period, the increasing independence of women and their community involvement outside their homes were perceived as threats and problems to the Roman household.[90] According to Terence Paige, Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures held varying perceptions of women's role in private, public, and religious spheres, although women's duties at home were highly regarded by

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[88] Knofel Staton, *The Biblical Liberation of Women for Leadership in the Church: As One Essential for the Spiritual Formation of the Church*, rev. ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 41.

[89] Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew" in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Rev. Sir Georgy Prevost (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956), 11.554, 13.515.

[90] Valerie A. Abrahamsen, "Women at Philippi: The Pagan and Christian Evidence," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 3, no. 2 (1987): 17–19.

all.[91] Unlike Greeks who viewed their public engagement as dishonorable and shameful, Roman women enjoyed more freedom and rights as they spoke with men other than their family members, participated in social life, entertainment, business, and other legal matters while taking care of their homes. [92] According to John Scheid (Director of Studies in Ancient History at the Ecole pratiques des hautes etudes in Paris), although Roman women could participate in civic religion and even aid in minor duties, the role of priesthood was mainly reserved for men.[93] In rare cases, women fulfilled priestly duties by the virtue of their marriages and one priestess of Ceres even presided over the state cult, which was exclusively for women. [94] Despite the seeming openness to female leadership in Rome, Fabienne Maslet argues that it was nothing more than "an illusion of freedom."[95]

Interestingly, while Greeks propagated gender inequality—especially in the political spheres—they worshipped goddesses and fully embraced women's roles at every level of religious activities in private and in public.[96] In Ephesus, the home of the Artemis temple, women were still considered inferior to men, but their "social practices made room for women to participate in religious and civic life as leaders."[97]

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[91] Terence Paige, "The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 12, no. 2 (2002): 226, 237.

[92] Ibid., 234-35.

[93] J. Scheid, "The Religious Roles of Roman Women," in *From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, vol. 1 of a History of Women in the West, ed. Pauline Schmitt Pantel (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1992), 379-80.

[94] Paige, "The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth", 236.

[95] Fabienne Liana Maslet, "The Mission and Role of Women in Graeco-Roman and Judeo-Christian Contexts" (Master's Thesis, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2019), 6, https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/theses/139.

[96] Paige, "Social Matrix," 231.

[97] Susan E. Hylen, "Women Διάκονοι and Gendered Norms of Leadership," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138, no. 3 (September 2019): 689.

Aquila was familiar with these varying interpretations of women's role from Greek, Roman, and Jewish perspectives. Despite his familiarity with the patriarchal culture in Italy, Corinth, and Ephesus, Aquila still chose to minister alongside his wife both at home and in public. He could have prevented Priscilla from talking to Apollos because the Greek culture disapproved of women talking to men other than their family members. He could have allowed her to assist him in teaching Apollos since the Roman culture still favored male leadership, especially in religious settings. Also, being a Jewish man, he could have instructed his wife to keep quiet and follow the instruction of learning from a husband. But he did not. Instead, he watched the anointing of the Holy Spirit flow through his wife as she taught Apollos and ministered to Gentile Christians alongside him. He was a truly supportive and countercultural husband.

Junia and her ally, Paul, an empowering ministry colleague. Junia was a female apostle mentioned briefly in Paul's farewell message to the church of Rome. Romans 16:7 reads: "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was." Despite such a minuscule presence in the Bible, her name has created quite a debate among scholars since the twelfth century regarding her gender.[98]

Eldon Epp, a textual criticism scholar, observed different Greek translations of Romans 16:7 between 1516 (Erasmus' version) and 2001 and discovered the overwhelming affirmation of Junia's femaleness until the Nestle-Aland version came out in 1927.[99] He also noted the

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[98] Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 101.

[99] Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2005), 62-63.

consistency of the female pronoun in the earlier English translations such as Tyndale

(1525/1534), Geneva Bible (1560), and King James Version (1611), which remained unchanged

for the next two centuries. However, in 1833, the Dickinson translation replaced Junia with

Junias and influenced most of the subsequent translations until the late 1990s.[100]

Epp observed that most opponents of female Junia neglect to quote the words of

Chrysostom, an early Church Father, who not only recognized Junia as a woman but also as an

outstanding apostle along with Andronicus.[101] His words about Junia's gender and apostolic

function were both clear and direct, leaving no room for ambiguity:

> "Greet Andronicus and Junia … who are outstanding among the apostles": To be an
> apostle is something great. But to be outstanding among the apostles—just think what a
> wonderful song of praise that is! They were outstanding on the basis of their works and
> virtuous actions. Indeed, how great the wisdom of this woman must have been that she
> was even deemed worthy of the title of apostle. (*In ep. Ad Romanos* 31.2; PG 60.669-
> 670)."[102]

Junia and Andronicus, as Paul's counterparts in Rome, were exceptional or distinguished

apostles, not just *well-known to* the apostles as some scholars argue to diminish their apostleship,

especially Junia's. However, Paul Foster claims that the absence of masculine Junias prior to the

1800s makes it difficult to deny that Junia was an outstanding female apostle.[103] Barr, a church

historian who changed her position from complementarianism to egalitarianism, notes that

"[female] *Junia* became [masculine] *Junias* because modern Christians assumed that only a man

could be an apostle." [104] Such a misogynist interpretation stems from the Church Fathers in the

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[100] Ibid., 66.

[101] Ibid., 32.

[102] Bernadette Brooten, "'Junia ... Outstanding among the Apostles' (Romans 16:7)," in *Women's Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, ed. L. Swidler and A. Swidler (New York: Paulist, 1977), 141.

[103] Paul Foster, "Junia—Female and an Apostle," *The Expository Times* 117, no. 9 (June 2006): 371.

[104] Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, 67.

medieval eras, who reformed the Christian theology and ecclesial leadership culture based on the Greco-Roman's negative perception of women as inferior and impure beings.[105]

Despite the ongoing debates on Junia's gender or the male-centric leadership culture throughout the church history, the Bible depicts Paul as a strong proponent of egalitarianism. He recognized the sacrificial ministry of Junia and honored her deep commitment to the apostolic ministry that matched the spiritual leadership level of male apostles. He was her champion by recognizing her ministry calling, service, and place as a spiritual leader.

But Junia was not the only woman Paul championed. Throughout his writings, he normalizes female ministers by referring to them as co-laborers, not just helpers.[106] As an empowering ministry colleague, Paul champions women, both Jews and Gentiles, as he recognizes their callings, gifts, and obedience to God. He publicly recognizes Euodia and Syntyche for bearing the burdens of ministry with him (Phil 4:3), Phoebe as a deacon of the church in Cenchreae (Rom 16:1), Priscilla as his co-laborer in Christ (v. 3), and Junia as a fellow prisoner who is "outstanding among the apostles" (v. 7). He leads, serves, teaches, and suffers with women for the cause of Christ. He transforms the ecclesial leadership culture by actively recruiting, investing, teaching, and sending women to participate in God's redemptive mission for all. Unashamed to publicly recognize or honor women alongside their male colleagues, he champions women by cultivating a culture of collaboration and co-dependence.

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[105] Ibid., 91.

[106] Deedra Shilliday, "Assessing the Personal Needs and Professional Issues That Hinder Credentialed Women in the Ohio Ministry Network: Egalitarianism and the Image of God" (D.Min., proj., Lakeland, FL: Southeastern University, 2019), 53.

Jesus, the affirming shepherd and ultimate champion. While Paul certainly was an exceptional male champion during his time, who empowered and advocated for women in spiritual leadership during his missional journeys, he was not the most radical one. Instead, Jesus was the true countercultural male leader who championed women when they had no legal voice, dignity, or authority. As the affirming shepherd, He championed both Jewish and Gentile women against the patriarchal culture. While the original sin created a hierarchy between men and women and "the curse has become a license for oppression,"[107] Jesus elevated the position of women by intentionally disrupting gender barriers. He invited women to learn from Him alongside men, and He even commissioned them as disciple-makers. He saw humanity through the eyes of an affirming shepherd, valued them at their core as God's image-bearers, and called women to fulfill unique roles beyond their traditional domestic responsibilities.[108] By removing the barriers for women and teaching them in public or homes—instead of synagogues where mostly men congregated—He offered them direct theological training. Furthermore, He instructed all His disciples to advance the gospel, not just the chosen twelve (Matt 28:19).

In their book, *Jesus: A Theography*, Len Sweet and Frank Viola note a series of incidents when Jesus encountered various female misfits yet was unashamed. When Jesus met the adulterous woman in John 8, He stood up for her by confronting the sinfulness of Jewish men instead of falling into their trap. At that moment, Jesus "became her attorney and saved her life. And He was not ashamed."[109] Often, Jesus featured women as the heroines in His teachings and parables, walked and talked with them, and healed them even at the most inopportune time

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[107] Staton, *Biblical Liberation of Women*, 135.

[108] Ibid., 98.

[109] Leonard Sweet and Frank Viola, *Jesus: A Theography* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 141.

because He genuinely cared for them and was not ashamed by association with disenfranchised women.[110] His way of affirming women was radical and countercultural.

First, Jesus affirmed women by intentionally inviting them to be part of God's redemptive mission. Due to the patriarchal culture, Jesus could have easily dismissed women and made them the bystanders of His miraculous ministry without anyone accusing Him of being sexist. Yet He chose the more complex path as He traveled with them and ministered to them through teaching and healing. As Stephanie Nance and Ava Oleson observe, "Jesus engaged 'with' women as opposed to protecting himself 'from' them."[111] Furthermore, He intentionally invited them, along with men, for Spirit-empowered life and ministry (Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-3).

Against the cultural norm, many followed Jesus outside their homes and supported God's mission with their time, treasures, and talents. "The women Jesus knew were active facilitators and strong, indispensable allies in his mission."[112] Interestingly, while all of Jesus's male disciples scattered after His crucifixion, it was the women who remained at His bloody feet until He took His last breath (Matt 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-44; Luke 24:10; John 19:25). These women remained committed followers, and more faithful than Jesus's closest associates: Peter, James, and John.

Second, Jesus affirmed women by publicly acknowledging their faith and contributions while rebuking the religious leaders and complacent Jewish men, including His disciples. A

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[110] Ibid., 142.

[111] Stephanie L. Nance and Ava Kate Oleson, "Living a Theology of Co-Gender Ministry," in *Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministry: Informing a Dialogue on Gender, Church, and Ministry*, vol. 21, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, ed. Margaret de Alminana and Lois E. Olena (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 351.

[112] Carolyn Custis James, *Malestrom: Manhood Swept into the Currents of a Changing World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 187.

poignant example is the story of Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anointed Jesus before His crucifixion (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-11; John 12:1-10). Jesus was at the house of Simon the Leper along with His disciples when Mary came without notice and started pouring a jar of expensive oil on Jesus. When the disciples saw this, they were shocked by her seemingly spontaneous action and irritated by the amount of money she wasted. When they questioned her action, Jesus stepped in and defended her by recognizing her faith and sacrificial contribution toward His impending death and burial. At this very moment, He empowered and advocated for Mary by affirming her faithfulness and acknowledging her wisdom that was greater than His disciples.

Third, Jesus affirmed women by elevating their social status and dignity in a male-dominated culture. He openly engaged and partnered with them against the cultural norm, spoke highly of them during their ministries, and frequently invited them into men's territory. In Luke 10, Jesus is found at the home of two sisters, Mary and Martha, teaching His disciples as usual. However, something was out of the ordinary. Mary's presence among the male disciples, learning at the feet of Jesus while her sister was preoccupied with hosting her guests, was quite unusual since the typical homes during that time had separate male and female areas.[113] Martha noticed this odd situation and pointed it out to Jesus. However, to her surprise, Jesus praised Mary's decision instead of sending her off to a kitchen. While Mary was "acting like a man,"[114] Jesus broke the social boundaries by affirming her place among His male disciples.

In John 4, Jesus broke cultural, racial, and social boundaries by intentionally talking to a Samaritan woman alone during the least traffic time of the day. This woman was living with a

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[113] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 143.

[114] Ibid., 144.

man that was not her husband. Jesus knew that the law forbade Him from talking to a Gentile, let alone a woman with a scandalous background, but He cared more about her soul than adhering to a degrading law that diminished her intrinsic value as God's image-bearer. Jesus willingly and unashamedly engaged in a transformational conversation and discipleship that transcended genders, cultures, ethnicities, and religions. As a result, this broken and outcast Samaritan woman became the first to learn about His messiahship and testify about Him to the Gentiles.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly champions women regardless of their socio-economic, cultural, and even religious backgrounds.[115] He also models cross-gender discipleship by personally investing in women in public (Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-3) and in private (Luke 10:38-42). He chooses women as the first witnesses of His resurrection and as those who deliver the good news to the room full of male disciples (Matt 28:10; John 20:17-18). Although the Jewish laws and traditions "forbade both the teaching of the Hebrew scriptures to women and the acceptance of the testimony of women, Jesus did both."[116] He was (and is) the ultimate advocate, ally, and champion for women called to "Spirit-empowered vocations."[117] He was the epitome of a countercultural leader who empowered and advocated for women intentionally, fearlessly, and shamelessly by removing gender stereotypes and redeeming their value, identity, and calling. He took risks because He fully believed that there was a place for women in the *missio Dei*.

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[115] Gill and Cavaness, *God's Women*, 74.

[116] Ibid., 75.

[117] Kimberly Ervin Alexander, "Pentecostal Women: Chosen for an Exalted Destiny," *Theology Today* 68, no. 4 (2012): 411.

Literature Review

Female leadership in the churches

Just as women actively participated in God's redemptive work alongside men throughout the Bible, in the same unified manner, the Church in every generation is responsible for carrying on the Great Commission until the Lord's return. In Matthew 9:37, Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." More than two thousand years later, His words still ring true today as the number of religiously non-affiliated Americans is rapidly increasing.

According to the *2020 Census of American Religion*, only 16 percent of Americans identified as non-religious or nones in 2007, but the number jumped to 26 percent in 2018.[118] That was 62.5 percent increase in eleven years. In 2020, however, the number went down to 23 percent[119]—still nearly the quarter of Americans who identify themselves as the nones. The alarming fact is that 36 percent of the nones were young adults (see Figure 1.1).

Brett Hoover notes that the rise of religious disaffiliation in the United States began in the early 1990s and became more prominent in the 2000s.[120] Furthermore, he identifies two primary factors that contributed to the increasing number of the nones: the social pressure of conforming into a collective identity and the negative association between religions and politics.[121] As a result, many people leave religions, particularly young Christians, so they can identify as part of a more inclusive and tolerant community that welcomes *all* thoughts and beliefs. The negative

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[118] "The 2020 Census of American Religion," Religion & Culture, *PRRI*, last modified July 8, 2021, accessed October 8, 2021, https://www.prri.org/research/2020-census-of-american-religion.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Brett C Hoover, "Evaluating the Moral Framing of Disaffiliation: Sociological and Pastoral Perspectives on the Rise of the 'Nones,'" *Religions* 12, no. 6 (June 2021): 1.

[121] Ibid., 3-4, 10.

examples of religious zealots, who often categorize and demonize others from different

backgrounds and values, force young people to choose between associating with or

disassociating from a religion. Much unlearning, relearning, and healing needs to take place to

redeem and restore this generation for Jesus. The harvest is still plentiful, and churches need

leaders of both genders to make disciples of all nations.

In 2019, *Pew Research Center* reported that 65 percent of American adults identified as

Christians, a steady decline from 77 percent in 2009.[122] Meanwhile, about 45 percent of

Christians attended religious services monthly or more,[123] making America a majority

unchurched nation. Despite such a declining trend of churchgoers, *US Data* showed that the

number of clergies grew by 6.4 percent between 2018 and 2019, and about 80 percent of them

were men.[124]
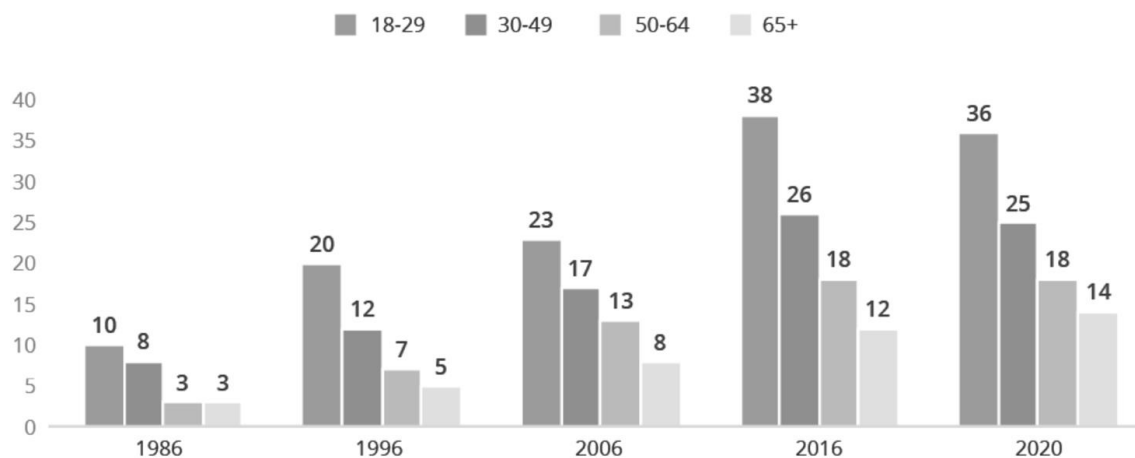
Sources: General Social Survey, 1986, 1996, 2006; PRRI American Values Atlas, 2016, 2020.

Figure 2.1 2020 Census of American Religion[125]

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[122] "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace: An Update on America's Changing Religious Landscape," *Pew Research Center*, last modified October 17, 2019, https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/.

[123] Ibid.

[124] "Data USA: Clergy," DataUSA, accessed November 16, 2021, https://datausa.io/profile/soc/clergy.

[125] The chart adopted from https://www.prri.org/research/2020-census-of-american-religion.

Although women comprised less than a quarter of the total American clergy in 2019, "ordained women in most Mainline denominations jumped from below 10% to between 20% and 40% of the fully credentialed clergy" between 1977 and 2017.[126] During the same period, female ministers in the Assemblies of God also grew from 15 percent to 25 percent, which increased to 27 percent in 2020.[127]
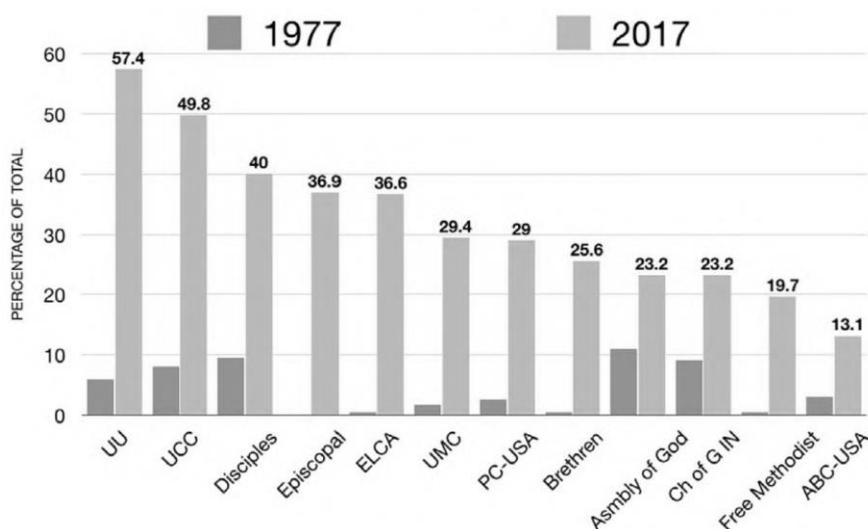
Figure 2.2 Clergy Women in American Mainline Denominations between 1977-2017[128]

Unfortunately, the 2017 research conducted by Eileen Campbell-Reed revealed that while the AG was the only denomination with over 10 percent of female credentialed ministers in 1977, it lost its pioneering spirit as evidenced by the slowest growth rate over the next four decades (see Figure 1.2). Despite the steady growth of female ministers across all denominations in America, the AG and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) were the two Pentecostal groups

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[126] Eileen R Campbell-Reed, "No Joke!: Resisting the 'Culture of Disbelief' That Keeps Clergy Women Pushing Uphill," *Cross Currents* 69, no. 1 (March 2019): 33.

[127] General Secretary's Office, "Female Ministers 1977 through 2020," Statistics (General Council of the Assemblies of God, July 16, 2021), http://www.ag.org/About/Statistics.

[128] Campbell-Reed, "No Joke!," 32.

that demonstrated a strong start with mediocre progress. In contrast, the United Churches of

Christ (UCC) and Unitarian Universalists (UU) were leading denominations that championed

women ministers with "overall numbers of clergywomen equalizing (50%) or surpassing the

numbers of clergymen."[129] UCC and UU are two of the most progressive and liberal

denominations as they are driven by social justice to support all marginalized demographics such

as ethnic minorities, women, and the LGBTQ+ community.[130]

Despite the growing number of female ministers across various Christian denominations,

except for the Roman Catholic Church and Southern Baptist Convention, the debate over

women's spiritual authority is ongoing.[131] The increasing feminist movement in the last five

decades helped liberate women from gender biases and empowered them to pursue and obtain

more education, better paying jobs, and freedom to pursue their dreams outside the domestic

life.[132] Unfortunately, in empowering women, society began to demasculinize and demonize men

as the cause and the source of women's sufferings. Such a distorted narrative only increased the

gap that already existed between men and women. Meanwhile, the churches experienced "gender

debate fatigue,"[133] and many Christians began to view women as "one of the greatest threats to

manhood."[134] Perceiving the opposite gender as a threat, rather than as a vital source of mutual

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[129] Ibid., 33.

[130] See more details about their beliefs and histories at their websites: "About the Unitarian Universalist Association," Unitarian Universalist Association, accessed November 23, 2021, https://www.uua.org/about; "Mission," United Church of Christ, last modified October 20, 2016, accessed November 23, 2021, https://www.ucc.org/mission.

[131] David Masci, "The Divide over Ordaining Women," *Pew Research Center*, September 9, 2014, accessed November 30, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/09/09/the-divide-over-ordaining-women/.

[132] James, *Malestrom*, 27.

[133] Ibid., 26.

[134] Ibid., 27.

benefits, will hinder both men and women from maximizing their leadership authority, skills, and influence to cultivate an ethical work environment.[135]

In response to the growing feminist movement, Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) was formed in 1987 to support complementarianism, while Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) was established in the following year to support egalitarianism by denouncing the Christian rhetoric that "excluded women, their gifting, and their abilities from ministry leadership."[136] In addition to the ongoing debate around the issue of women in ministerial leadership, the story of Beth Moore leaving the Southern Baptist Convention in 2019, after serving in that denomination for more than three decades, caused many to question their theological and organizational position on women called to leadership.[137] Even though some labeled her as a heretic influenced by the progressive culture of liberalism and wokeness,[138] her open letter about her experiences of being dismissed, disrespected, sexualized, and criticized exposed the dark side of the conservative Evangelical world.[139]

Regardless of the different interpretations of the Bible on female leadership, there is no room for misogyny, abuse of power, jealousy, favoritism, oppression, or discrimination in the body of Christ. While the issue of women ministers is not a salvific matter, it remains critical for

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[135] Donna M. Randall, "Leadership and the Use of Power: Shaping an Ethical Climate," *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 6, no. 1 (2012): 33.

[136] Melissa L. Archer and Kenneth J. Archer, "Complementarianism and Egalitarianism—Whose Side Are You Leaning On? A Pentecostal Reading of Ephesians 5:21–33," *PNEUMA* 41, no. 1 (2019): 71, 78.

[137] Bob Smietana, "Bible Teacher Beth Moore, Splitting with Lifeway, Says, 'I Am No Longer a Southern Baptist,'" *Religion News Service*, last modified March 9, 2021, accessed November 30, 2021, https://religionnews.com/2021/03/09/bible-teacher-beth-moore-ends-partnership-with-lifeway-i-am-no-longer-a-southern-baptist/.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Beth Moore, "A Letter to My Brothers," *Living Proof Ministries Blog*, May 3, 2018, accessed November 30, 2021, https://blog.lproof.org/2018/05/a-letter-to-my-brothers.html.

the AG to address so that men and women can continue to support, edify, and serve alongside one another as God's image-bearers and co-laborers in Christ.

Female leadership in the Assemblies of God

Since its inception in 1914, the AG has welcomed dynamic and charismatic women to be part of Spirit-empowered ministry based on its theological conviction (i.e., Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:16-18). During the early days of the Pentecostal movement sparked by the Azusa Street Revival, the imminent return of Christ was at the forefront of the Church's mission, and women played a vital role as spiritual influencers. Initially, females were ordained as missionaries and evangelists without voting rights at the General Council since such was regarded as the role of elders, exclusively reserved for men back then.[140] As non-elder ordained ministers, women could not fulfill sacerdotal duties such as performing a wedding, funeral, baptism, or communion.[141]

At the 1920 General Council, women finally received voting rights, "the same year the 19th Amendment was adopted, which granted women in the United States the right to vote."[142] However, they continued to face leadership limitations as the male-dominated leadership culture permeated the institutionalized churches in the early 1920s.[143] Then, in 1922, the active ordained women were provisionally allowed to fulfill their ministerial functions "when necessary" under

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[140] Deborah Menken Gill, "The Contemporary State of Women in Ministry in the Assemblies of God," *Pneuma* 17, no. 1 (1995): 33.

[141] George Wood, "Exploring Why We Think the Way We Do About Women in Ministry," *Influence Magazine*, last modified June 6, 2018, accessed December 1, 2020, https://influencemagazine.com:443/en/practice/exploring-why-we-think-the-way-we-do-about-women-in-ministry.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Assemblies of God General Council, "The Role of Women in Ministry," Position Papers, August 9-11, 2010, accessed December 1, 2020, http://www.ag.org/About/Statistics.

the leadership of E. N. Bell, the first general superintendent of the AG. But the official

recognition of their full ministerial rights did not take place until the 1935 General Council.

Unfortunately, such institutional affirmation of female ministers did not transform the

organizational culture overnight to equally support men and women in their growth, service, and

ministry. As a result, many credentialed women continued to remain unseen and voiceless for

years to come because changing the organizational culture and practices is much more complex

than revising an official position paper. According to Joy Qualls, the problem of such a gap lies

in the AG's organizational identity as a voluntary cooperative fellowship or "voluntary

cooperation among churches" rather than a denomination with a hierarchal or governmental

structure.[144] As a result, the national office or leadership cannot mandate the incorporation of

female ministers at all leadership levels despite its theological conviction.

More than eight decades after the 1935 General Council, AG female ministers still

struggle to incorporate into the vital decision-making tables locally, regionally, and nationally.

Despite the affirmative official position on women in leadership, most senior leadership roles,

such as lead pastors, district officials, and national leaders, are still heavily occupied by men.

Such a trend is changing gradually, however, thanks to male advocates and allies who

purposefully discover, develop, and deploy gifted women as spiritual leaders.

George O. Wood, former general superintendent of the AG and current chairman of the

World AG Fellowship, is one of the influential male champions who intentionally invested in

female ministers at the national level. During his formative years in northwest China in the early

1920s, he grew up learning from various active female ministers, including his mother, an

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[144] Joy Elizabeth Anderson Qualls, "'God Forgive Us for Being Women': The Rhetorical Negotiation and Renegotiation of the Role of Women in the Assemblies of God" (Ph.D., diss, Virginia Beach: Regent University, 2010), 152. This title is also available in a book: Joy E. A. Qualls, *God Forgive Us for Being Women* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018).

ordained minister.[145] While it was natural for him to see women as spiritual leaders, as a local pastor, and later as a national leader, he fought against the organizational culture that often excluded competent women from mainstream ministerial leadership platforms. As a pioneering male champion for female ministers, Wood started a national initiative called The Task Force for Women in Ministry (now known as The Network of Women Ministers or NWM) in 1999 with Beth Grant as the first leader to train, empower, advocate for, and mentor female ministers in the AG.[146] As a result, the number of credentialed ministers grew by 59 percent (from 16.2 percent to 25.8 percent) between 1999 and 2017, the year of his retirement as general superintendent. Today, the NWM continues to train, support, collaborate with, and advocate for past, present, and future female ministers by helping them fully integrate into every level of ministerial leadership.[147]

The number of female ministers continues to increase under the newly elected general superintendent, Doug Clay, who often publicly celebrates, normalizes, and champions female ministers. He grew up watching the spiritual leadership of his single mom, which greatly impacted his view on women in ecclesial leadership. As a result, he appointed several female ministers to visible leadership platforms at local, district, and national levels. One of the notable female ministers he championed is Donna Barrett, the first elected female executive leader at the AG national office since 2018.[148]

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[145] Wood, "Exploring Why We Think the Way We Do about Women in Ministry."

[146] "About NWM," Network of Women Ministers, accessed December 1, 2020, https://www.womenministers.ag.org.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Mark Forrester, "Donna Barrett Elected General Secretary," *PENews*, last modified April 23, 2018, accessed December 6, 2019, https://news.ag.org:443/news/donna-barrett-elected-general-secretary. The official name of the AG national office is National Leadership and Resource Center (NLRC).

For Clay, hiring or working with women does not have to do with political correctness. Reflecting on the appointment of Barrett, he noted, "When I nominated Donna Barrett for general secretary, it wasn't because she was a woman. She had the skillset and experience. But being a woman was an extra advantage because she brings a different view."[149] As the leader holding the highest position at the national level, Clay models how to lead a winning team that intentionally invites people from diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences. He welcomes, not resists, differences as a pathway to creativity and productivity. Barret's national appointment, affirmed by the chief male leader in its denomination, highlights the critical role of male champions for women in their leadership development and advancement.

The intentional efforts of national leaders such as Wood and Clay have significantly transformed the dynamics of ministerial leadership in the last decade, but the change has been much slower at the local level with a disproportionately low number of women serving in the executive roles. For instance, women represented only 4 out of 206 district officials (1.9%), 20 out of 222 district executive presbytery (9%), 50 out of 743 sectional presbyters (6.7%), 627 out of 10,669 lead pastors (5.8%).[150] Despite these sobering numbers, the fact that competent women are serving in these influential roles is worth celebrating.

In addition, women like Migdalia Quiñones (the first female assistant superintendent in Puerto Rico from 2011 to 2014) and Doris Quirós (the newly elected first female assistant superintendent in the Southern Latin District as of 2021) represent the positive outcomes of a changing culture toward gender-inclusive leadership.[151] According to the 2020 qualitative survey

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[149] Kristi Northup, "Empowering Women to Lead," *Influence Magazine*, last modified April 15, 2019, accessed December 7, 2020, https://influencemagazine.com:443/en/practice/empowering-women-to-lead.

[150] General Secretary's Office, "2020 Ministers Credentials and Marital and Ministry Status by Gender," Statistics (General Council of the Assemblies of God, April 27, 2021), http://www.ag.org/About/Statistics.

on *The Health of the Assemblies of God (USA) Concerning the Advancement of Female Ministers to Executive Leadership Roles*—the study of the lived experiences of fifteen female executive leaders in the AG at the local, regional, and national levels—male mentors and advocates played a key role in helping them transition into higher leadership positions.[152]

The report also provided three critical changes necessary to transform the AG leadership culture: (1) Train male leaders to develop aspiring male allies or advocates by affirming the value of gender-inclusive leadership, (2) incorporate female ministers to visible speaking opportunities and decision-making tables, and (3) update the bylaws to reflect gender equality in leadership and normalize cross-gender interactions in mentoring, training, and networking opportunities, which often result in a promotion or higher income.[153]

Despite the setback in the early 1920s and an apparent dissonance between its professed egalitarian theology and lived experiences of female ministers, the AG has been making strides toward empowering both men and women called to ministerial leadership, with the most notable changes occurring at the national level. Reflecting on the increasing diversity at the top leadership during the 2021 General Council, Kennedy reported on *PENews* that "[f]or the first time in its 107-year history, women and ethnic minorities now make up the majority of the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God."[154] Currently, four women (two Hispanics and two Caucasians) make up 19 percent of this twenty-one-member national board of directors,

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[151] Deann Alford, "Female Assistant Superintendent Elected," *PENews*, last modified November 2, 2021, accessed November 17, 2021, https://news.ag.org:443/en/news/first-female-assistant-superintendent-elected.

[152] Saehee Duran, "The Qualitative Research on the Health of the Assemblies of God (USA) Concerning the Advancement of Female Ministers to Executive Leadership Roles" (doctoral term paper, Lakeland, FL, Southeastern University, 2020), 12.

[153] Ibid., 15-16.

[154] John W. Kennedy, "Top Diversity Increases," *PENews*, last modified August 6, 2021, accessed September 1, 2021, https://news.ag.org:443/en/news/top-diversity-increases.

although such a milestone still falls short of the national average (26.5%) of female board members of the Fortune 500 companies.[155]

The strengths of the AG are its theological conviction that supports women at all levels of leadership and its various training opportunities for credentialed women, including the NWM that specifically focuses on equipping and resourcing future and current female ministers. However, the major weaknesses are the lack of male mentors and advocates as well as the male-centric leadership culture that undermines the value of female leaders. Consequently, the increasing number of credentialed women do not have tangible platforms to maximize their giftings or voices to contribute toward God's Kingdom. Thankfully, a small group of male champions is opening doors for competent female leaders, starting at the national level. The gap between the lived experiences of female ministers and the AG's official position on women in ecclesial leadership is narrowing, but true gender equality at all levels of leadership has only begun.

Female leadership in the marketplace

The corporate world is ahead of the Church in advancing women into top-tier leadership positions. Even though secular workplace does not draw their motivation or principles from the Bible, their experiences and strategies on training, empowering, affirming/advocating, and mentoring women will offer great insight into what works and what does not.

Since 2014, more than 100 countries have celebrated International Women's Day on March 8 to commemorate women's accomplishments and contributions toward social, cultural,

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[155] "Missing Pieces Report: The Board Diversity Census," *Deloitte United States*, accessed November 17, 2021, https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/center-for-board-effectiveness/articles/missing-pieces-board-diversity-census-fortune-500-sixth-edition.html.

political, and economic development and advancement worldwide. While this celebration began

in New York City on February 28, 1909, it did not become official until 1911 in Europe. [156] The

United Nations (UN) declared 1975 as "International Women's Year." Two years later, they

designated March 8 as the UN Day for Women's Rights and World Peace.[157] Such a global

recognition of women's value is a testament to their passion and ability to participate in the

decision-making processes to transform their nations and future generations.

Unfortunately, American women did not have much freedom or opportunities to work in

the corporate world until Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act passed.[158] However, this federal

law did not transform the world overnight for the marginalized, such as ethnic minorities and

women. Today, the world still rages over the issue of racism and attempts to recontextualize the

1964 statute to advocate for the ever-evolving definition of sex or gender identity.[159] Meanwhile,

gender disparity at work perpetuates the old system (i.e., exclusive male leadership culture) and

hinders the leadership advancement of high-capacity women.

In 2019, 33 percent of the fortune 500 companies' CEOs were women. While this is a

significant increase from the previous year at 24 percent,[160] the disparity in the pay gap, the

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[156] Sarah Pruitt, "The Surprising History of International Women's Day," *HISTORY*, last modified February 19, 2021, accessed March 5, 2021, https://www.history.com/news/the-surprising-history-of-international-womens-day.

[157] "History of International Women's Day," *The Women's Information Network*, accessed March 8, 2021, https://www.internationalwomensday.org/history-of-international-womens-day.

[158] Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli, *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth about How Women Become Leaders* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2007), 14.

[159] William N. Eskridge, Brian G. Slocum, and Stefan Gries, "The Meaning of Sex: Dynamic Words, Novel Applications, and Original Public Meaning," *Michigan Law Review* 119, no. 7 (May 2021): 1573.

[160] Maria A. Pardalis, "Why We Need Men to Empower Women in the Workplace," *Thrive Global*, June 3, 2019, accessed February 15, 2021, https://thriveglobal.com/stories/why-we-need-men-to-empower-women-in-the-workplace.

leadership pipeline, mentoring opportunities, and a male-dominated leadership culture still pose

significant challenges against women desiring to advance in their leadership. Between 1950 and

2004, women constituted half of the world's population, yet less than 5 percent of women

comprised the top leadership.[161] That number has been steadily increasing each year, but female

leaders remain a minority in the leadership world.

Since men occupy most decision-making seats, male allies have unique positional power

to help remove invisible barriers to empower women aspiring to grow their professional

influence and visibility. The challenges women face at work are often the result of a white-male

leadership culture.[162] The best solution to these professional roadblocks is replacing gender

disparity with gender intelligence, which views gender differences as strengths, not weaknesses

or threats.[163] Organizations that lead with gender intelligence are far more successful in equally

advancing men and women at all levels of leadership and perform with greater "innovation,

productivity, and finance."[164] Hence, a healthy organization creates a culture of collaboration and

constant evaluation by inviting people with different experiences, perspectives, and knowledge

to the leadership table.

Unfortunately, too much emphasis on sexual immorality or misconduct at work distorts

the value and benefit of gender-inclusive interactions while dismissing the professional needs of

women through cross-gender training and mentoring. The BGR, created in 1948, further

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[161] Susan E. Perkins, Katherine W. Phillips, and Nicholas A. Pearce, "Ethnic Diversity, Gender, and National Leaders," *Journal of International Affairs* 67, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2013): 95.

[162] Shannon E. Polk, "Creating Pathways to Leadership for Women of Color in the Assemblies of God" (D.Min. proj., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2017), 68.

[163] Barbara Annis and John Gray, *Work with Me: How Gender Intelligence Can Help You Succeed* (London: Piatkus, 2016), 26.

[164] Barbara Annis and Richard Nesbitt, *Results at the Top: Using Gender Intelligence to Create Breakthrough Growth*, 1st ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 131.

complicates this issue by prohibiting all one-on-one meetings or interactions between the

opposite genders regardless of the context or purpose. Although this guideline was created by a

Christian man along with his ministry associates, the idea of excluding women from privileged

conversations or meetings also perpetuated the marketplace.

Damon Duran notes, "Diverse leadership happens only with intentionality."[165] For both

men and women to thrive in their leadership journey without compromising each other's

integrity or professionalism, an organization must nurture a teaming mindset that promotes

mutual support around the unified identity and purpose.[166] Such an effort takes intentionality and

enduring commitment from the top-tier leadership, occupied mostly by men. Male leaders, then,

would need to personally own the value of mix-gender collaboration, advocate for female leaders

publicly, and model wholesome cross-gender friendships and professional relationships built

around trust and authenticity.[167]

Myths about female leadership

Some of the challenges of cross-gender mentorship stem from legitimate concerns that can

threaten or question someone's integrity and motive. However, unrealistic fear, concerns, or

myths significantly decrease the value of mentoring people of the opposite sex in the leadership

world. Some of these myths include the following: women hinder the company's success,

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[165] Damon C. Duran, "Intentionally Diverse: Raising Awareness in the Life360 Church Network of the Multiethnic Community in the Springfield, Missouri Metropolitan Area" (D.Min., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2017), 56.

[166] Robert C. Crosby, *The Teaming Church: Ministry in the Age of Collaboration* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), 33.

[167] Dave Ferguson and Warren Bird, *Hero Maker: Five Essential Practices for Leaders to Multiply Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 218.

diversity training resolves the tension between men and women at work, men are naturally more qualified for higher leadership than women, women are not ambitious in their careers, and human sexuality prevents ethical cross-gender mentorship.

Myth #1: Women hinder a company's success. A good analogy that defies such a myth comes from the story of Earl Tupper, the inventor of Tupperware during World War II, who unexpectedly discovered the importance of women's voice for his business success. Tupper initially worked as a contractor to make plastic parts for gas masks and jeeps.[168] However, when the war ended, he nearly lost his job due to the lack of demand. Fortunately, his resilience and creative mind led him to experiment with a few things that finally landed in the creation of Tupperware. The consumers—mostly women—loved them at first, but they soon called perfectly good products defective and returned them to the stores.

Then came Brownie Wise, who urged Tupper to pull out all his products from the stores and take them into each house to show women how to use the products properly. Her recommendation eventually changed the business model to exclusive home-party sales, which saved his business. Their success story demonstrates the importance of inviting female perspectives in planning or decision-making processes for organizational success. Unlike the myth, women can positively impact their company's bottom line as they bring their unique perspectives and experiences to evaluate various challenges and offer creative solutions.

Myth #2: Diversity training resolves the tension between men and women at work. During the 1990s, diversity training focused mainly on engaging white men to include more women and ethnic minorities at work.[169] Unfortunately, such efforts only increased the hostility

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[168] Joanne Lipman, *That's What She Said: What Men Need to Know (and Women Need to Tell Them) About Working Together*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: William Morrow, 2018), 20.

[169] Ibid., 71.

of white male leaders by making them feel discriminated against without yielding any long-term change. Pointing to white men as the cause of the leadership disparity does not narrow the gap for women at work. Instead, it often yields the opposite effect. According to sociology professor Frank Dobbin, "any training that smells like legal compliance is sure to backfire."[170] Hence, diversity training fails when required or offered to the upper management only.

However, the key to success is appealing to organizational success, mutual benefits, and increasing the awareness of gender disparity at work rather than forcing white men to make mandated changes.[171] Training that focuses on unconscious biases invites men and women to reflect on their own prejudices while working toward a common goal without finger-pointing. Therefore, the assumption that diversity training can fix gender disparity at work is false and inapplicable for cross-gender mentorship.

Myth #3: Men are naturally more qualified for higher leadership than women. Based on culturally conditioned gender biases and stereotypes, this false assumption contributes to the lack of respect for competent female professionals. Women in leadership constantly must prove themselves to solidify their credibility despite their glowing credentials. A 2015 Pew survey concluded that most Americans view women "as superior to men when it came to leadership qualities like honesty, fairness, and compassion."[172] Interestingly, the same study discovered that male leaders receive far more respect than their counterparts because of the subconsciously elevated status of men's qualifications. Such a perception, held by both men and women, forces women to perpetually prove their worth, knowledge, and abilities.

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[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid., 74.

[172] Ibid., 92.

Moreover, the stereotypes against female leaders constantly invalidate their leadership competency by scrutinizing their work more harshly than men's. On the other hand, men often receive praise and respect for their potential rather than their actual performances.[173] Such a respect gap continues to fuel gender disparity at work while distorting the value and perception of high-capacity female leaders. It also affects cross-gender training and mentoring opportunities due to the false assumption that women will never reach their highest potential.

Myth #4: Women are not ambitious in their careers. After reviewing numerous empirical studies on how men and women negotiate, Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever discovered that even competent women hesitate to advocate for themselves, negotiate their salaries, or ask for promotions because society associates such forwardness or competitive spirit with "the providence of men."[174] Their reluctance stems from the culturally conditioned upbringing that discourages girls from being competitive, assertive, and bold—and stay that way into adulthood.[175] When boys or men speak up, their boldness is deemed admirable and appropriate. Yet when girls or women speak up, their attitude is considered bossy, aggressive, or inappropriate. Hence, women struggle to find a balance between being confident and being liked.

Contrary to the myth that women are not ambitious at work, a study conducted by Bain & Company reported that "43 percent of women aspired to top management early in their careers, versus 34 percent of men."[176] Unfortunately, the number of ambitious professional women decreases eventually due to the lack of mentors or peer support in a male-dominated world.

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[173] Johnson and Smith, *Athena Rising*, 17.

[174] Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever, *Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), xiii.

[175] Ibid., 62.

[176] Lipman, *That's What She Said*, 135.

Many career women willingly return to work shortly after childbirth despite the challenge of juggling responsibilities between work and family life. They do not want the changes in personal life to affect their careers, but they desire to remain productive and resourceful in both worlds.

Sometimes, the myth of women's low professional ambition comes from their lack of proactive pursuit of higher pay or advanced position. Competent leaders rarely settle for the salary or position that is below their capabilities or contributions. While men confidently negotiate their salary until they feel satisfied, women struggle to ask for what they deserve because either they do not know their true value or feel uncomfortable putting a price on their contributions. Instead, women tend to prove their worth through a good track record and wait for someone else to recognize their value and promote them accordingly, which is called the "tiara syndrome."[177]

Assuming that women are not ambitious in the workforce based on their resistance to speak up due to the fear of negative ramifications or the tiara syndrome hinders the dynamics of cross-gender mentorship. Understanding the silent ambition of women can help male mentors be more intentional in their training, advocating, mentoring, and empowering female mentees.

Myth #5: Human sexuality prevents ethical cross-gender mentorship. This fear-driven myth ignores the purpose of cross-gender mentorship by reducing competent, high-capacity leaders into mere sexual beings. "Mentoring talented people of both genders is a hallmark" of leadership identity.[178] Intentional mentors and mentees conduct themselves with dignity and mutual respect and cooperatively establish healthy boundaries for successful outcomes.

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[177] Ibid., 124.

[178] Johnson and Smith, *Athena Rising,* 28.

Those who effectively engage in non-sexual cross-gender mentorships view their sexuality as a sign of healthy human beings, use logic to avoid romantic encounters, and intentionally put each other's professional roles first before sexuality. Johnson and Smith sternly warn men against equating the friendliness of female mentees with their "romantic interest and availability."[179] Such erroneous assumptions unnecessarily increase the fear against cross-gender mentoring relationships and destroy the opportunities for high-potential female protégés to be mentored by male champions.

The number of women is increasing in almost all professions. But until top leadership reflects gender equity, male leaders are uniquely positioned to help women understand and thrive in that world. Courageous and confident men can debunk myths surrounding female leaders and cross-gender mentorship by focusing on the mutual wins for their mentees, organizations, and themselves. In a male-dominated leadership world, men remain a crucial key to empowering women called to lead.

Barriers to female leadership

According to Alice Eagly and Linda Carly, women in America did not have much freedom or opportunities to work in the corporate world until Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 legally allowed them to do so.[180] They analyzed the development of female leadership, observed the psychological biases against women, and highlighted substantial progress of women toward

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[179] Ibid., 36.

[180] Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli, *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth about How Women Become Leaders* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2007), 14.

achieving their personal and professional goals; some even making it to the top leadership such as CEOs, university presidents, political leaders, and etc.

According to 2019 Women in the Workplace, female executive leaders have grown steadily in the past five years.[181] However, they remain significantly underrepresented at every level of corporate leadership and continue to struggle to move beyond the entry-level positions. This phenomenon, known as a "broken rung,"[182] indicates an unusually big gap between the administrative role and the supervising position in the corporate ladder.

The promotion of competent female leaders from mid-level to senior-level leadership poses another big challenge. In 2010, *Harvard Business Journal* reported that "high-potential women are overmentored and undersponsored relative to their male peers—and that they are not advancing in their organizations." [183] This suggests that different mentoring approaches produce contrasting outcomes for men and women. While male mentees receive personal guidance on how to pursue, plan, and execute their next level of leadership, female mentees are directed toward managing projects or attending meetings/conferences for greater exposure. The research concluded that men still get more promotions and better pay than women despite such mentoring efforts.[184] Moreover, since promoting women comes with unknown risk factors, some organizations hesitate to advance them in their leadership ladder.[185]

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[181] "Women in the Workplace 2019: The State of Women in Corporate America," *Lean In*, accessed December 6, 2019, https://leanin.org/women-in-the-workplace-2019.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carter, and Christine Silva, "Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women," *Harvard Business Review*, September 1, 2010, accessed October 15, 2019, https://hbr.org/2010/09/why-men-still-get-more-promotions-than-women.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Ibid.

Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, finds the metaphor of the

corporate ladder limiting because it portrays only one way to the top. Recognizing the unique

barriers women face, she offers a "jungle gym" model to help women reach their leadership

potential through different seasons of life.[186] This model challenges women to take risks and

explore unconventional ways to achieve their career goals without relying on particular

individuals. At the same time, as a benefactor of supportive male champions, she recognizes the

importance of senior men mentoring women. Sandberg further argues that when men

intentionally sponsor and champion women, both the organization and individuals benefit

mutually.[187] The topic of men mentoring women became more prevalent in the marketplace in

the last few decades as more qualified women surfaced to the top leadership.

Meanwhile, women also have played an integral part in the life of the Church, and their

fingerprints are found at nearly every level of ministry. The Bible records the voices of eighty-

six women—both named and unnamed—from diverse ethnic, cultural, language, and socio-

economic backgrounds. Many of them spoke with divine authority and power given by the Holy

Spirit against their cultural norm. Today, that same divine ministry leadership endorsement is

readily available to all Spirit-led Christians regardless of one's gender, according to Acts 2.

However, many women relinquish their rights to obey the divine leadership responsibility due to

the constant glass ceilings they experience in ministry.

Numerous studies on the dynamics of female ministry leadership agree that the rising

number of female ministers is disproportionately represented in their ministry leadership

placement. A study that surveyed 77 percent of female ministers in the Pentecostal Church of

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[186] Sheryl Sandberg and Nell Scovell, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 53.

[187] Ibid., 71.

God confirmed that women face continual barriers despite their leadership readiness or

qualification demonstrated by education, ministry credentials, experiences, and a call to lead.[188]

It also concluded that women receive less church/denominational support from friends and

family.[189] Another study proved a significant growth of female ministers between 1976 and 2016

from a mere 6 percent to 20 percent[190]. Yet, it also indicated that women received much less pay

and more frequently served part-time than their counterparts.

The challenges of female ministers also come in other forms. In her book, *Developing*

Female Leaders, Kadi Cole noted that 95 percent of high-level female ministers come from

various marketplace leadership backgrounds.[191] Yet, many of them have to fight against gender

biases, doctrinal prohibition, and even self-doubt. In her interviews with over a thousand female

leaders, she discovered that men played a vital role as mentors, sponsors, and coaches in their

leadership journey.[192] Meanwhile, Robyn Wilkerson, who received the ministerial calling in the

early 1970s, recalled an enduring challenge of finding "no [female] mentors or peers who were

flourishing as leaders inside the church" during the early days of her ministry. [193] Although now

she is a nationally known author, pastor, and speaker, her ministerial journey attests to the

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[188] Kimberly Ervin Alexander, *What Women Want: Pentecostal Women Ministers Speak for Themselves* (Lanham, MD: Seymour Press, 2013), 29.

[189] Ibid., 137.

[190] Cyrus Schleifer and Amy D. Miller, "Occupational Gender Inequality among American Clergy, 1976-2016: Revisiting the Stained-Glass Ceiling," *Sociology of Religion* 78, no. 4 (January 8, 2018): 388.

[191] Kadi Cole, *Developing Female Leaders: Navigate the Minefields and Release the Potential of Women in Your Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2019), 38.

[192] Ibid., 79.

[193] Robyn Wilkerson, *Shattering the Stained Glass Ceiling: A Coaching Strategy for Women Leaders in Ministry* (Springfield, MO: Influence Resources, 2017), 31.

complex leadership pathway for women and a desperate need for coaching aspiring female

leaders, especially in local churches.

Sherry Surratt and Jenni Catron's research supports that many women deeply desire to

lead despite the barriers ahead. Acknowledging the complex dynamics of men and women

working together in churches, they address overcoming culturally conditioned insecurities,

loneliness, doubts, and fear with confidence, authenticity, and humility.[194] The authors also

recognize some of the challenges are self-imposed while others are out of control. An example of

this is the culture of golf. While women can learn to play golf, it is unknown whether men will

invite them to their game.[195] Despite such limited opportunities for social engagement, Surratt

and Carton believe women can break barriers by having different kinds of mentors throughout

their leadership journey. [196] While the need for mentors is equally important to both genders,

women cannot teach themselves how to work with men, socialize with men, or lead men without

intentional support and mentoring of male allies or advocates. Their unique contributions will

help men and women to interact with mutual respect, honor, and trust.

The challenges of female leadership are real and exist both in the marketplace and in

churches. Women at all levels of leadership face various forms of barriers daily, and their

struggles grow as the leadership ladder moves upward. The following section will focus on four

obstacles that hinder women's professional development and promotion: gender biases, invisible

hurdles, #MeToo movement, and the BGR.

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[194] Sherry Surratt and Jenni Catron, *Just Lead! A No-Whining, No-Complaining, No-Nonsense Practical Guide for Women Leaders in the Church*, The Jossey-Bass leadership network series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 23, 35, 59.

[195] Ibid., 106.

[196] Ibid., 67.

Gender biases. Despite the growing number of female leaders, the contemporary leadership culture is still biased toward men. Janice Yonder argues, "Leadership is gendered. How women enact their role as a leader is inextricably intertwined with the basic realization that they are women bringing with them all the stereotypic baggage that comes with gender roles."[197] Unlike their male counterparts, most female leaders grew up cautiously balancing between perceived bossiness and strong leadership.[198] People often associate dominance, assertiveness, and competitiveness with men or managerial roles. Therefore, when women manifest these leadership characteristics that defy femininity or domestic image, it creates resistance.[199]

Some of the stereotypical gender biases against women question their ability to think logically, manage emotions, instruct people, balance family and work, understand leadership politics, and handle stress.[200] Such gender biases also exist in churches. According to Kimberly Alexander, male ministers with charisma are perceived as anointed, while women with the same charismatic trait and gift are criticized for having the spirit of Jezebel.[201] One study observed that "global male-typed leadership schemas" created the barriers that hindered women from advancing to higher leadership over the years.[202] It also concluded that while women can

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[197] Janice D. Yoder, "Making Leadership Work More Effectively for Women," *Journal of Social Issues* 57, no. 4 (December 2001): 815.

[198] Surratt and Catron, *Just Lead!*, 9.

[199] Eagly and Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, 88.

[200] Jack L. Simonetti and Sonny Ariss, "Through the Top with Mentoring," *Business Horizons* 42, no. 6 (1999): 57.

[201] Kimberly Ervin Alexander, "Pentecostal Women: Chosen for an Exalted Destiny," *Theology Today* 68, no. 4 (2012): 405.

[202] Priyanka Dwivedi, Aparna Joshi, and Vilmos F. Misangyi, "Gender-Inclusive Gatekeeping: How (Mostly Male) Predecessors Influence the Success of Female CEOs," *Academy of Management Journal* 61, no. 2 (April 2018): 397.

advance in leadership on their own, male leaders play a vital part in removing unnecessary barriers by changing the organizational culture and structure to become more gender-inclusive.[203]

Invisible Hurdles. The barriers of female leadership are difficult to detect since they exist in the forms of a 'glass-ceiling,' 'labyrinth/maze,' 'broken rung,' and 'good old boys' club.' The term glass-ceiling was first introduced in 1986 by the drawing of Hymowitz and Schellhardt in the *Wall Street Journal*.[204] It indicates the invisible barriers in an organization that "prevent women from obtaining equality with their male counterparts.[205] The invisible glass ceiling does not easily break by getting higher education or more job-related experiences and training. In the church context, the same phenomenon is known as the 'stained-glass ceiling,' where different pay rates and leadership roles evidence the disparity between men and women.[206] Women of color, especially African American women, encounter a more significant discrepancy based on their gender, race, and class.[207] In response to such challenges, several books and articles have been written—primarily by female authors—to increase the awareness of such invisible glass-ceiling narratives and offer solutions by engaging men.

In addition to the glass ceiling, women also go through an invisible maze or labyrinth to achieve their career goals. While this expression affirms women's ability to get to the leadership table independently, it also indicates the messy and confusing process toward the top. Karin

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[203] Ibid., 401.

[204] Eagly and Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, 4.

[205] Schleifer and Miller, "Occupational Gender Inequality," 390.

[206] Ibid., 391.

[207] Courtney Lyons, "Breaking through the Extra-Thick Stained-Glass Ceiling: African American Baptist Women in Ministry," *Review & Expositor* 110, no. 1 (2013): 86.

Klenke argues that the "motherhood manacle" is one of the major setbacks for female leaders.[208]

Although men with children are often viewed as competent and successful, women with children

or women with pregnancy potential are deemed unreliable since their time off from work poses a

threat to the company. Once women take maternity leave (i.e., extended time off from work as a

result of childbearing or child-caring), it becomes harder for them to return to work or find a new

position with flexibility. As a result, women must find creative ways, including detours, in their

career path.

Another barrier to professional development and promotion is called a 'broken rung.'

Lean In, an organization that supports women leaders in diverse contexts, identified this

phenomenon in their 2019 *Women in the Workplace* survey. Researchers concluded that the

biggest obstacle for female leaders is the first step to the manager role beyond the entry-level

position.[209] The common practice of excluding women from various social settings, such as an

informal meeting at a golf field, further complicates invisible barriers.

Unfortunately, the prevailing culture of gender exclusivity prevents women from being

known personally (i.e., their ambitions, contributions, and potential). Contrarily, their male

counterparts have easier access to their male mentors with decision-making power and receive

more support from them, directly impacting their pay raise and promotion. Liz Elting observes

that "Boys' clubs function because they offer a valuable asset: solidarity."[210] As a result, women,

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[208] Karin Klenke, *Women in Leadership: Contextual Dynamics and Boundaries*, 2nd ed. (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2017), 466, accessed December 8, 2019, http://0-ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzE1NTcyNTBfX0FO0?sid=cd217767-d772-4ba5-a9cd-a0108bd5a29c@pdc-v-sessmgr05&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1.

[209] "Women in the Workplace 2019: The State of Women in Corporate America," *Lean In*, accessed December 6, 2019, https://leanin.org/women-in-the-workplace-2019.

[210] Liz Elting, "How to Navigate a Boys' Club Culture," *Forbes*, accessed November 30, 2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizelting/2018/07/27/how-to-navigate-a-boys-club-culture.

who do not share the same gender as their male mentors, easily miss fast-track mentorship, support, professional development, and leadership advancement opportunities. Unless determined male leaders intentionally disturb such a gender-exclusive leadership culture, educated and competent women will continue to experience a lack of visible leadership opportunities while being robbed of a joy of sharing life and growing with brothers and co-laborers in Christ.[211]

#MeToo movement. According to *Forbes*, separate surveys conducted by *Pew Research Center, Source Media,* and *Lean In all* concluded that the #MeToo movement has had an adverse effect on female leadership advancement. [212] An increasing number of men expressed their discomfort or fear of working alone with a woman. *Pew Research Center* reported 51 percent of 6,251 male respondents said that the recent emphasis on sexual harassment made it harder to interact with women at work.[213] Meanwhile, *Lean In* demonstrated that 60 percent of the 5,182 male supervisors surveyed are less likely to participate in "a common work activity with a woman, such as mentoring, working alone, or socializing together."[214] Such a hostile work environment is neither good for men nor women.

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[211] Bev Murrill, "Womentoring," *Mutuality* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 16, 18.

[212] Prudy Gourguechon, "Why in the World Would Men Stop Mentoring Women Post #MeToo?," *Forbes*, last modified August 6, 2018, accessed October 15, 2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/prudygourguechon/2018/08/06/why-in-the-world-would-men-stop-mentoring-women-post-metoo.

[213] Nikki Graf, "Sexual Harassment at Work in the Era of #MeToo," Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project, April 4, 2018, accessed November 24, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/04/04/sexual-harassment-at-work-in-the-era-of-metoo.

[214] "Working Relationships in the #MeToo Era," *Lean In*, accessed November 24, 2021, https://leanin.org/sexual-harassment-backlash-survey-results.

In addition, since the launch of #MeToo movement, more companies have preferred to hire men than women to avoid potential sexual allegations.[215] Such a platform also gave birth to #ChurchToo and #PentecostalSistersToo campaigns to give voice to the victims of sexual abuse and expose the misuse of power within the gender-biased church leadership structure and system.[216] While such a politically charged movement can negatively impact the interactions between men and women at work, it is possible to reverse a gender-biased and fear-based organizational culture through intentional efforts. Peter Strauss highlights the importance of acknowledging positive examples of male-female professional relationships while urging men to step up even more as part of the solution. He states, "At a time when men might be pulling away from mentoring to avoid any hint of impropriety with a female colleague, we need more men to mentor women because they'll be helping to positively change the workplace."[217] Hence, removing the barriers for women anticipates the active participation of male allies and advocates.

Dedicated male champions who genuinely care about the success of their mentees will rise above their preferences, discomfort, or fear to open doors for aspiring female leaders against the cultural norm. Motivated by common goals and collective wins, they will actively transform their organizational culture where men and women can thrive as supportive colleagues rather than liable sexual objects that threaten each other's integrity, morality, and reputation. Championing work is risky, and effective leaders take risks.

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[215] Ibid.

[216] Linda M. Ambrose and Kimberly Alexander, "Pentecostal Studies Face the #MeToo Movement: Introduction," *Pneuma* 41, no. 1 (June 13, 2019): 4.

[217] Peter J. Strauss, "4 Tips for Men Mentoring Women During a Sensitive Time in the Workplace," *Business Journal (Central New York)* 32, no. 18 (May 7, 2018): 6B.

The Billy Graham Rule (BGR). Another major hindrance to leadership development for women is the BGR. In 1948, when there were virtually no female ministers serving on visible platforms, Billy Graham and his three evangelical associates created "the Modesto Manifesto" to uphold their morality and integrity during their ministry trips in response to some negative examples of their contemporary traveling ministers.[218] They formed four core ideas to address the need for accountability in the areas of financial abuse, sexual immorality, anti-church/anti-clergy attitude, and false publicity. Their intention for creating these self-imposed guiding principles was to honor God, their families, and the Church during their frequent ministry trips away from home. As a result, many ministers, primarily men, quickly adopted this Manifesto with equal respect to all four areas.

However, the original intent of the four-point BGR changed over time to merely mean avoiding alone-time with *any* woman, which severely hinders the collaborative efforts and mentoring opportunities for increasing female ministry leaders. Over seven decades later, the span of one generation, the BGR is still widely practiced among Christian leaders from all denominations as well as political leaders, such as the former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, who vowed to not eat alone with a woman other than his wife.[219] Robert Foster, a state representative in Mississippi who ran for governor in 2019, also closely observes the BGR. He was put on a hot seat when he refused a news reporter, Larrison Campbell, from shadowing him

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[218] Billy Graham, "What's 'the Billy Graham Rule'?," *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*, last modified July 23, 2019, accessed March 1, 2021, https://billygraham.org/story/the-modesto-manifesto-a-declaration-of-biblical-integrity.

[219] W. Brad Johnson and David G. Smith, "Men Shouldn't Refuse to Be Alone with Female Colleagues," *Harvard Business Review*, May 5, 2017, accessed March 1, 2021, https://hbr.org/2017/05/men-shouldnt-refuse-to-be-alone-with-female-colleagues.

on a fifteen-hour political campaign trip unless she brought another male colleague.[220] In the end, she neither joined him on the trip nor fulfilled her career goal.

For high-profile male leaders living in a heightened #MeToo and #ChurchToo culture, working alongside women may feel like walking into a blazing fire. In addition, the fear and anxiety of engaging in any interactions with the opposite gender is heightened in the churches as a result of several high-profile male leaders compromising their moral integrity by abusing their positional power and authority.[221] But strict adherence to the BGR in a world with an increasing number of women entering the workforce calls for revision or recontextualization to offer equal access to training, mentoring, networking, and socializing opportunities for both men and women.

The leadership world is still male-oriented and male-dominated. Women cannot thrive in such a gender-biased culture without the help of their male champions. The sheer lack of female executive leaders makes it nearly impossible for women to find female mentors, who are not fearful of meeting with their female mentees in public or private. The research is conclusive: When women are out of sight of their potential career champions, mentors, and advocates, they are "less likely to achieve promotion and more likely to leave their jobs."[222] The BGR perpetuates such a barrier for female leaders by intentionally separating men and women from life-giving and career-transforming conversations and engagements.

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[220] Karen Zraick, "Mississippi Politician Denies Access to Female Reporter So as Not to 'Insinuate' an Affair," *The New York Times*, last modified July 10, 2019, accessed March 2, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/10/us/robert-foster-female-reporter.html.

[221] Ambrose and Alexander, "Pentecostal Studies Face the #MeToo Movement," 2-3.

[222] W. Brad Johnson and David Smith, *Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women* (New York, NY: Bibliomotion, 2016), 22.

Stanford Social Innovation Review reported that male allies are the key to empowering and advocating for women while intentionally transforming their organizational culture, policy, and strategies to advance competent female leaders to the next leadership level.[223] The narrow understanding of the BGR within its original context, coupled with the fear of public eyes, feeds into the destructive lies that men are sex-crazed animals without the functional frontal lobes while women are temptresses who constantly prey on men to destroy their families, work, and reputation.[224] Such fear-based sexism leads to the lack of cross-gender collaboration and cooperation at the leadership tables, resulting in decreased creativity, efficiency, productivity, and favorable outcomes.

The AG has been supportive of women in ministry leadership since its inception. During the early years of its formation, when the urgency for evangelism and discipleship was high, many female pioneers served as teachers, missionaries, pastors, church planters, educators, and other spiritual roles locally, nationally, and globally. However, as the churches began to be institutionalized, the once-thriving-presence of female frontline ministers began to take backstage roles.

Although the breakthrough occurred when Donna Barrett became the first elected female minister to join the AG national executive leadership since its founding in 1914,[225] the gap between the AG's public endorsement of female ministers and their lived experiences is still wide. As a result, there is a big vacuum for a female voice in the top leadership at the local church, district, and national levels. Subsequently, women called to ministry leadership fail to

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[223] Alice Allen et al., "How Business Can Engage Men as Allies for Gender Equality," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, last modified March 4, 2020, accessed February 15, 2021, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_business_can_engage_men_as_allies_for_gender_equality.

[224] Johnson and Smith, "Men Shouldn't Refuse to Be Alone with Female Colleagues."

[225] Forrester, "Donna Barrett Elected General Secretary."

find male allies and advocates who will provide necessary training, mentoring, networking, and socializing opportunities that directly impact their leadership growth, advancement, and influence. Melissa Archer observes that Spirit-empowered women long for denominations that will welcome and normalize their leadership calling and gifts.[226] As a Pentecostal organization that endorses the Spirit-empowered life and ministry of all believers according to the Scripture, the AG provides the best theological and practical contexts to remove the barrier of the BGR and champion women at every level of ministerial leadership.

Removing the barriers

Thus far, this literature review has explored the existing barriers common to female leaders both in the marketplace and in religious organizations. The following section will discuss the possible solutions to removing the unique obstacles of female leadership in three intentional strategies: (1) championing mindset, (2) championing method, and (3) championing metamorphosis or process. These suggestions can shed light on what women actually need compared to what men think women need in order to break down the invisible barriers against female leaders.

Championing mindset: Gender intelligence and restored siblinghood. The male-dominated leadership context of the AG is slowly changing toward gender equality and inclusiveness that mirrors their theological conviction. Meanwhile, the American culture and expectations for female leadership are changing due to the increasing number of working women. In the past, many women entering a male-driven leadership world were advised to act like men to receive

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[226] Melissa L. Archer, "Women in Ministry: A Pentecostal Reading of New Testament Texts," in *Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministry*: *Informing a Dialogue on Gender, Church, and Ministry*, vol. 21, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, ed. Margaret de Alminana and Lois E. Olena (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 36.

equal respect and acceptance. However, such gender-exclusive language invertedly dismisses the value of different perspectives and experiences that can strengthen organizational health, efficiency, and productivity in reaching the desired outcomes.

Today, gender equality at work no longer translates into the minority group conforming to the majority culture.[227] Historically, women have learned to change the way they talk, think, behave, look, and even dress in order to fit in with the masculine leadership culture.[228] However, Barbara Annis and John Gray observed that "companies that lead with gender intelligence are far more successful in advancing women and men in unison" while sustaining gender balance at all levels of organizational leadership.[229] The gender-intelligent organization regards gender differences as strengths, not weaknesses or threats. A healthy organization creates a culture of collaboration and constant evaluation by inviting people with different experiences, perspectives, and knowledge to the leadership table.

Kent Ingle, president of Southeastern University and the author of *Framework Leadership*, argues that understanding the organizational context and the intended outcome is critical for mapping out necessary changes for long-term success.[230] For the AG, its official egalitarian position on women in ministry provides a great theological and ecclesial context that affirms female ministers. Their intended outcome is equipping both men and women to faithfully make disciples of all nations according to the Great Commission in Mathew 28:19. The bottom-

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[227] Annis and Gray, *Work with Me*, 14.

[228] Joanne Lipman, *That's What She Said: What Men Need to Know (and Women Need to Tell Them) About Working Together* (New York, NY: William Morrow, 2018), 1-4.

[229] Annis and Gray, 26.

[230] Kent Ingle, *Framework Leadership: Position Yourself for Transformational Change* (Salubris Resources, 2017), 13.

line success for the AG is reproducing disciple-making disciples. Ingle also encourages periodic and purposeful evaluations of the context and outcome to realign an organizational framework and stay innovative while managing risks, challenges, or threats.[231] Most importantly, he commends courageous leaders who embrace change and even anticipate it to ensure ongoing organizational health, improvement, and efficacy.[232] The AG must examine (and re-examine periodically) its leadership culture within their organizational context to ensure their practices align with their mission, belief, and intended outcome.

A gender-intelligent organization creates a thriving culture that welcomes and appreciates everyone's contribution toward a common goal. Gender-intelligent leaders are aware of potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of cross-gender interactions, but they do not operate based on the fear of false accusation or compromising sexual integrity. Instead, they put an individual's calling and role first before gender. For instance, when meeting a female pastor, gender-intelligent male champions see a pastor who is a woman, not a *woman* who is a pastor. In a male-dominated leadership world where there is a lack of female mentors, both in the marketplace and in Christian organizations, men remain the most influential key to transforming the leadership culture by implementing a gender-intelligent mindset. However, since anyone is susceptible to sin (Rom 3:23), as demonstrated by numerous fallen clergy, restoring the image of siblinghood among ministers is critical to fulfilling God's mission.

In her 2018 interview with John Ortberg, author and senior pastor, Kadi Cole, explored how to reimagine the way men and women interact with each other so that everyone can win and thrive as a team. He warned against the unhealthy "strategy of isolation," which is a "misguided

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[231] Ibid., 38, 54, 96.

[232] Ibid., 99.

attempt" to uphold the BGR at the expense of dishonoring, discarding, and disapproving competent female leaders solely based on their gender.[233] Instead, he offered three helpful ways to create a safe environment in which men and women can work together with mutual integrity, honesty, and honor without seeing each other as sexual beings: (1) The sibling test: When interacting with someone with the opposite gender, do I treat another person the same way I treat my sibling?, (2) the screen test: If my interaction with the opposite gender was displayed on a screen for the whole congregation to see, would I feel guilty or ashamed?, and (3) the secret test: Am I keeping secrets about this person of the opposite gender from others close to me such as a spouse?[234]

Paul and Jesus, the best biblical examples of male champions, would have passed all three tests. Moreover, Paul's constant practice of addressing Christians from various churches as spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ affirms Ortberg's idea of the sibling test. Since all believers share the common identity as "the children of God" (Matt 5:9; John 1:12; Rom 8:14, Gal 3:26; Phil 2:15, etc.), ministers must regard each other primarily as siblings to cooperate toward common goals in mutual love and support. Therefore, intentional male champions view gender differences as strengths and support female leaders as siblings in Christ.

Championing method: Gender-inclusive T.E.A.M.ing model. Despite the benefits of cross-gender collaboration in the workplace, it causes a certain level of anxiety and fear in some men. Such a reluctance to mentor women often stems from unconscious gender biases and stereotypes[235] that

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[233] Cole, *Developing Female Leaders*, 110.

[234] Ibid., 111.

[235] Johnson and Smith, *Athena Rising*, 16.

view women as less fit for leadership because they are emotional, fragile, mysterious, and unpredictable. Meanwhile, some men feel inadequate to mentor women due to their inability to relate to the pains and professional dilemmas faced by their female mentees. Still, others who recognize the growing needs of female mentees struggle to overcome the fear of public scrutiny, false rumors, and compromising sexual integrity.[236]

Gender biases—whether conscious, subconscious, or unconscious—negatively impact women's experiences related to the hiring process, leadership pipeline, promotions, income, leadership style, and training or mentoring opportunities. Google, a large multinational tech company that prides itself on its inclusivity, diversity, and tolerance, discovered that they unconsciously eliminated competent women with advanced degrees and experiences from the applicant pool purely based on gender.[237] They also realized that the gender biases held by men in the hiring committee greatly hindered female employees from receiving promotions and appropriate compensations. As such, gender biases present a myriad of challenges for women in the workforce. Therefore, new strategies are needed to champion women in leadership.

Leadership development strategy #1: Training. Successful male champions know how to develop leaders by providing personalized training based on their individual professional needs and goals. W. Johnson and David Smith, rare male champions for female leaders, claim that men must invite women into the male-dominated leadership world and provide access to privileged information or knowledge they cannot have otherwise.[238] Passing along the inside scoop such as "the organization's culture, its assumptions, traditions, and taboos" along with the

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[236] Ibid., 24, 27.

[237] Lipman, *That's What She Said*, 48–49.

[238] W. Brad Johnson and David Smith, *Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women*, 1st ed. (Brookline, MA: Bibliomotion, 2016), 106.

insight on the potential "foes, competitors, allies, and neutral parties" will greatly assist women in their leadership journey.[239]

In her doctoral dissertation within the AG context, Shannon Polk addresses the importance of developing cultural competency in female leaders as they interact with diverse people groups in churches.[240] Understanding diverse cultures, including the culture of men, can equip female leaders to lead a mixed-gender team or congregation toward accomplishing a common goal with mutual respect and honor. Another study by Angel White on female ministers in pastoral leadership discovered that while pastors of both genders hold ministerial credentials, more women work full-time outside the church and receive less pay than men despite having more education.[241] The number of women receiving higher education and ministerial credential is increasing rapidly. However, receiving formal, one-size-fits-all training does not remove the barriers for women leaders. It takes intentional and personalized training that provides unique insight, experiences, and opportunities to develop leadership skills based on personal needs, goals, and growth areas.

Leadership development strategy #2: Empowering. The fear of public scrutiny and false accusation hinders the dynamics of cross-gender mentorship despite the good intention of male mentors. According to Johnson and Smith, every man acts according to their unique "man script" that governs their view of and interactions with others.[242] These scripts also affect how they engage women at work. If they have a healthy version of the man script, then their

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[239] Ibid., 104.

[240] Polk, "Creating Pathways," 74.

[241] Angel Elizabeth White, "Female Ministers in Pastoral Leadership: A Phenomenological Study" (D.M., University of Phoenix, 2015), 116, accessed September 10, 2019, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

[242] Johnson and Smith, *Athena Rising*, 59.

relationship with women will be healthy, authentic, transparent, empowering, and mutually edifying.

However, unhealthy versions of the man script will fail to empower women by turning cross-gender mentorship into three damaging relationships: (1) father-daughter, (2) warrior/knight-maiden in distress, and (3) seducer-seductress.[243] In the first category, a man can be an overbearing protector, undermining the competency and independence of female leaders as a result. The second category assumes that women are helpless without the chivalrous act of men, causing female leaders to withdraw by refusing to take action when necessary. The last category is the most dangerous of all as it alters the intent, the process, and the nature of gender-inclusive leadership into a sexual affair. Such a promiscuous relationship violates the trust between a mentor and a mentee while damaging the relationships with others around them as well as the reputation of the organization they represent.

To add to these existing challenges, sociologist Michael Kimmel notes that most men do not view themselves as gendered beings.[244] As a result, they equate gender disparity at work with women's issues, disassociating themselves from the topic altogether. Such a view is problematic as it hinders them from acknowledging their contribution to both the problem and the solution. If men fail to see the gender gap faced by women, then they cannot help narrowing the gap, let alone care enough to address the issue from their position of power and authority. Recognizing the lived experiences from the women's perspective and empathizing with their struggles is an important step toward empowering women in leadership.

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[243] Ibid., 60–61.

[244] Lipman, *That's What She Said*, 7.

While all male leaders can engage in some level of empowering endeavor, only a few male advocates or allies can tangibly influence the women's leadership pathway through "pay raises, high-profile assignments, and promotions."[245] Sylvia Hewlett identifies such men as sponsors. Unlike mentors who offer their time, energy, and wisdom for the sole purpose of encouraging their mentees, sponsors view their empowering role as "an important investment in his or her own career, organization, or vision."[246] In other words, sponsors invest in their mentees for mutual edification and benefits. The nature of such a transactional relationship is based on trust, not affinity.[247]

Table 2.2 Comparison Between Mentors and Champions[248]

Mentors	Mentors/Sponsors	Sponsors
• Experienced person willing to help and support you • Builds your confidence and provides a sounding board • Offers empathy and a shoulder to cry on • Expects very little in return	• Advice • Guidance • Makes introductions • Gives feedback	• Senior person who believes in your potential and is willing to take a bet on you • Advocate for your next promotion • Encourages you to take risks and has your back • Expects a great deal from you (stellar performance and loyalty)

Women need both mentors and sponsors in their leadership journey, but only sponsorship guarantees actual breakthroughs in their careers (see Table 2.2). Mentors and sponsors share some similarities in functions, but they each have distinct outcome-based goals. While mentors focus on cheering their mentees during their leadership journeys, sponsors remove barriers along

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[245] Cole, *Developing Female Leaders*, 84.

[246] Sylvia Ann Hewlett, *The Sponsor Effect: How to Be a Better Leader by Investing in Others* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2019), 19, Kindle.

[247] Ibid., 21.

[248] Ibid.

the way so that their mentees can reach the top efficiently. The comparison between mentors and champions demonstrates that their roles are complementary, yet their goals are different. Either way, the road to advancing women in leadership is a two-way commitment. As male leaders and female protégés commit to collaborate for common goals, they will create a safe and welcoming leadership culture in which everyone is heard, seen, valued, and encouraged to learn from each other's unique perspectives and experiences.

Leadership development strategy #3: Affirming or advocating. David Scholer, a former professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, penned a satirical list of ten reasons why men should not be ordained as ministers. Unfortunately, he only used it as part of his class presentation and did not publish it before his passing in 2002. Thankfully, though, one of his former students shared the list on her blog in 2005, which became the source for others to share on other social media platforms. Although these ten reasons are humorous, Scholer affirmed women's role as spiritual leaders and advocated for them in a non-threatening, thought-provoking way.

10. A man's place is in the army.

9. For men who have children, their duties might distract them from the responsibilities of being a parent.

8. Their physical build indicates that men are more suited to tasks such as chopping down trees and wrestling mountain lions. It would be "unnatural" for them to do other forms of work.

7. Man was created before woman. It is therefore obvious that man was a prototype. Thus, they represent an experiment, rather than the crowning achievement of creation.

6. Men are too emotional to be priests or pastors. This is easily demonstrated by their conduct at football games and watching basketball tournaments.

5. Some men are handsome; they will distract women worshipers.
4. To be ordained pastor is to nurture the congregation. But this is not a traditional male role. Rather, throughout history, women have been considered to be not only more skilled than men at nurturing, but also more frequently attracted to it. This makes them the obvious choice for ordination.

3. Men are overly prone to violence. No really manly man wants to settle disputes by any means other than by fighting about it. Thus, they would be poor role models, as well as being dangerously unstable in positions of leadership.

2. Men can still be involved in church activities, even without being ordained. They can sweep paths, repair the church roof, and maybe even lead the singing on Father's Day. By confining themselves to such traditional male roles, they can still be vitally important in the life of the Church.

1. In the New Testament account, the person who betrayed Jesus was a man. Thus, his lack of faith and ensuing punishment stands as a symbol of the subordinated position that all men should take.[249]

As a professor who invested in the future generation of Christian leaders, Scholer opposed complementarianism and exposed the inconsistency in gender-biased arguments against women in leadership. As male leaders like him continue to affirm or advocate for women in classrooms, there are others who champion women in ministry on the ground.

In the late 1950s, David Yonggi-Cho, founder of Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea (the counterpart of the AG), was the first Korean male leader who affirmed the spiritual leadership of women and exponentially grew his church through their active ministries.[250] He was an exceptional countercultural leader as he recruited, trained, empowered, affirmed, and mentored women against the patriarchal culture at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Despite the cultural reluctance and rejection to embrace female leadership, he kept affirming their roles by entrusting them with privileged responsibilities to lead and oversee cell groups. His advocating efforts transformed South Korean culture to be more accepting of gender-inclusive leadership, especially in churches.

Various men affirm or advocate for women for different reasons. According to Suzanne Shoger, "[m]otivation is a key influencer on an individual's decision to become an ally."[251] For

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[249] Stasi, "Top Ten Reasons Why Men Should Not Be Ordained," *Feminary*, November 1, 2005, accessed November 29, 2021, http://feminary.blogspot.com/2005/11/top-ten-reasons-why-men-should-not-be.html.

[250] Darrin Rodgers, "Yoido Full Gospel Church: How Women Ministers Fueled the Growth of the World's Largest Church," *Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center*, November 2, 2017, accessed November 29, 2021, https://ifphc.wordpress.com/2017/11/02/yoido-full-gospel-church-how-women-ministers-fueled-the-growth-of-the-worlds-largest-church.

[251] Suzanne Grassel Shoger, "Engaging the Gatekeepers: Empowering Male Collegians to Promote Gender Equity in Engineering" (Ph.D. diss., Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University, 2018), 48, accessed May 12, 2021, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2125437061/abstract/487F71079BC24C21PQ/3.

Cho, the voice of the Holy Spirit was a sufficient motivating factor for him to champion women against the cultural norm. In her doctoral study, Victoria Mattingly observed that men are more likely to participate in allyship training when they learn that senior leadership views them as an essential part of the solution, not the problem, to gender equality at work.[252] Receiving such an exclusive invitation from an executive leader who values and affirms their "right and responsibility" to influence the future of their organization serves as a great motivating factor. By nature, men want to fix problems. When given the right motivation, they will gladly sign up to participate as problem-solvers and form an advocating brotherhood for women in leadership.

Leadership development strategy #4: Mentoring. Healthy leaders engage in an ongoing life-giving mentor-mentee cycle. Unfortunately, since men occupy most of the top leadership and often practice the BGR, many aspiring women feel isolated, undervalued, and unsupported in their leadership journey, unlike their counterparts. Crystal Turner-Moffatt observes that if the current trend of female leadership in top leadership continues, the number of women in higher leadership will increase only by 1 percent in the next ten years.[253] The solution to this impending tragedy is healthy cross-gender mentoring since it creates an inclusive organizational culture that welcomes and normalizes diverse teamwork.

The idea of cross-gender mentoring is not a product of the twenty-first-century business strategy. An article from *Training and Development Journal* in 1983 discussed the same topic in favor, which urged the organizations to employ formal and informal cross-mentoring to "train,

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[252] Victoria Prescott Mattingly, "Glass Kickers: Training Men as Allies to Promote Women in Leadership" (Ph.D. diss., Fort Collins, Colorado: Colorado State University, 2018), 37, accessed May 12, 2021, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2169133393/abstract/487F71079BC24C21PQ/2.

[253] Crystal Turner-Moffatt, "THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP: Strengthening Women in Leadership Roles," *Professional Safety* 64, no. 8 (August 2019): 19.

inform, support, communicate, tie to the organization's overall needs and strategy."[254] This thirty-eight-year-old article articulates the same issues and needs concerning cross-gender mentoring that are still relevant today, demonstrating alarmingly slow progress for removing gender biases and invisible barriers for women at work.

If casual or informal cross-gender mentoring is not readily available, formalized or structured mentoring is another option to enrich both mentees and mentors to foster a positive work environment and benefit the organization's bottom line.[255] Valuing the formal mentoring approach, Sarah Alter suggests making mentoring part of the supervisor's job description and offering it to both men and women.[256] Establishing such a guideline will help set an expectation for ongoing professional development and increase team synergy and productivity.

James Clawson and Kathy Kram suggest having a clear boundary and role expectations of practicing healthy cross-gender mentorship and reducing risk factors.[257] Kate Ashford recommends scheduling meetings instead of impromptu hangouts, meeting in public, preferably at the same time and location, and informing others about the mentoring relationship to prevent gossip or false accusations.[258] Effective mentoring takes two people equally committed and mutually edifying. Just as women need to diligently look for mentors with the right skillsets, knowledge, and network, male leaders must also proactively seek female mentees with the right

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[254] Elizabeth Lean, "Cross-Gender Mentoring: Downright Upright and Good for Productivity," *Training & Development Journal* 37, no. 5 (1983): 65.

[255] Ibid., 16.

[256] Sarah Alter, "Male Mentors in a #MeToo World," *Progressive Grocer* 97, no. 6 (June 2018): 26.

[257] James G. Clawson and Kathy E. Kram, "Managing Cross-Gender Mentoring," *Business Horizons* 27, no. 3 (1984): 26.

[258] Kate Ashford, "Why Men Don't Mentor Younger Women—And How We Can Change That," last modified May 12, 2013, accessed October 15, 2019, https://www.themuse.com/advice/why-men-dont-mentor-younger-womenand-how-we-can-change-that.

heart, goals, and potential to excel in their expanding leadership role and influence.[259] Aspiring female leaders need action-oriented mentors with decision-making authority to help remove the gender-biased barriers for long-term organizational health, creativity, and productivity.

Removing barriers takes various forms of interventions and strategies. Though not exhaustive, the T.E.A.M.ing model offers a holistic approach to championing women through intentional training, empowering, affirming/advocating, and mentoring. But there is one more critical aspect that can ensure the effectiveness of this model: the suffix "-ing." It signifies the continuation of these efforts between men and women that will help sustain the gender-inclusive leadership culture in the long run.

Championing metamorphosis: Moving from unawareness to normalization of female leadership. Building a gender-inclusive leadership culture is not a one-time event, seminar, or training. Instead, it is a process of teamwork. Jennifer Brown, a diversity and inclusion expert, created what is called "the inclusive leader continuum" to help leaders develop a culture of belongingness at work so everyone can thrive.[260] Although she is part of the LQBTQ+ community, the principle behind this model of becoming an inclusive leader can be contextualized to serve various marginalized or underprivileged people groups in every culture and generation—based on age, gender, color, language, socio-economic status, etc.

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[259] Wendy Murphy, "Advice for Men Who Are Nervous about Mentoring Women," *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles* (March 15, 2019): 2-5.

[260] Jennifer Brown, *How to Be an Inclusive Leader: Your Role in Creating Cultures of Belonging Where Everyone Can Thrive* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publisher, Inc., 2019), 15.
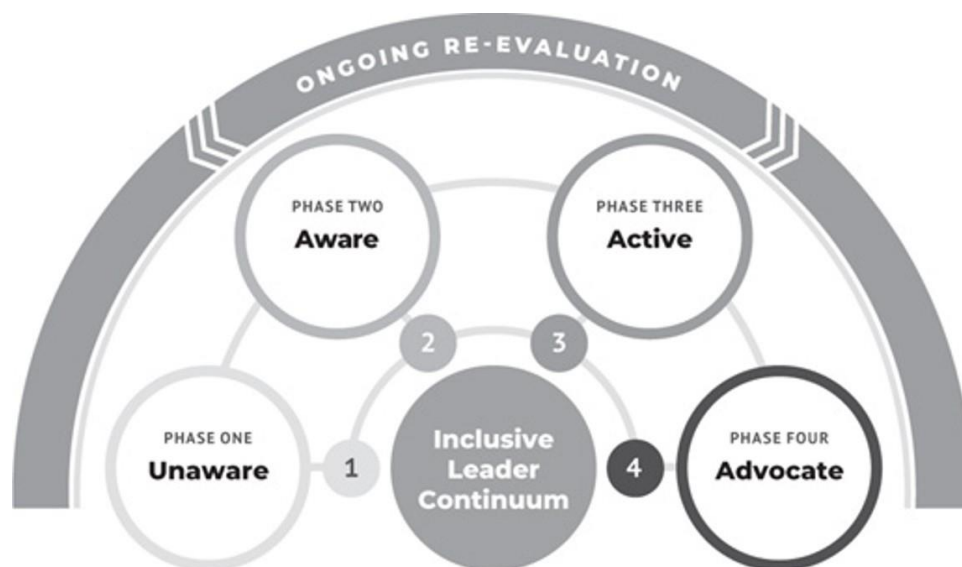
Figure 2.3 The Inclusive Leader Continuum

Everyone falls somewhere in between this spectrum of leadership continuum. The goal is to move from unawareness to advocacy. This is not a sequential journey since people have different levels of understanding about various diverse groups. For instance, a woman may fully advocate for other women based on their gender affinity. However, a white woman cannot wholly empathize with or support women of color because of the lack of perspective or experience unique to ethnic minorities. Meanwhile, any white woman or man can develop their understanding of other ethnicities and increase their advocating voices as they continue to grow and evaluate (and re-evaluate) their perspectives. By adopting and contextualizing this model, male ministers in the AG can become better allies or advocates for female ministers who long to be understood and supported by their peers, mentors, or sponsors.

Another helpful model comes from the Mayor's Commission on Equity and Equality based in Springfield, MO, where a group of community leaders meets monthly to form guiding principles "that will be applied to make Springfield more inclusive and improve equitable access

to opportunities to all."[261] The primary purpose of such guiding principles is to "improve

equitable access to opportunities, recognizing the inherent dignity, value, and worth of each

individual."[262] Their discussions focus on the five areas of change: (1) dialogue and

understanding, (2) cultural consciousness, (3) advocacy and partnerships, (4) structural and

systemic barriers, and (5) personal and organizational accountability.[263]

This group of diverse leaders from various backgrounds, worldviews, and experiences

embraces the ongoing process of learning, unlearning, and re-learning. They discovered that a

journey toward creating an inclusive culture is a complicated process of moving from

unawareness to awareness, from awareness to advocacy, from advocacy to collaboration, from

collaboration to celebration, and from celebration to normalization. Such a process is not linear

but circular, which is more conducive for continual learning and evaluating to reflect different

contexts and constituents. The AG can learn from their work and apply the principles in their

efforts to continue to champion women in ministerial leadership.

Summary

The theological and biblical studies on women in ministerial leadership offer great insight into

how male allies can successfully champion women in ministerial leadership in the AG. Despite

differing views on women in leadership, the Bible affirms women's leadership calling, roles, and

collaboration with their male colleagues for *mission Dei*. God is the source of all human

authority, who alone ordains or anoints leaders without showing favoritism to any specific

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[261] "Mayor's Initiative on Equity and Equality," *City of Springfield*, accessed November 29, 2021, https://www.springfieldmo.gov/5443/Mayors-Initiative-on-Equity-and-Equality. The researcher is the co-chair of the committee selected by the mayor in March 2021.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Ibid.

culture, ethnicity, social class, or gender. Despite the patriarchal culture in the OT and NT eras, God chose many women with exceptional faith, courage, and spiritual gifts to participate in His redemptive work. These women worked alongside, not in the absence of, men who willingly relied on, supported, empowered, and affirmed their leadership voices and influence.

Although complementarianism opposes women's spiritual authority over men, the examples of Barak, Hilkiah, Aquila, Paul, and Jesus support egalitarian ecclesial leadership. They normalized collaborative, cross-gender leadership culture within the body of Christ. In addition, they established biblical models for other male allies or advocates to emulate for championing women in their ministerial leadership calling and journey. As the ultimate role model, Jesus trained, empowered, affirmed, and mentored women so they, too, could fulfill the Great Commission. Male allies or advocates in the AG can and must likewise champion women in ministerial leadership.

However, the journey toward championing women in leadership is complicated, challenging, and controversial. Since the mid-1960s, women in the United States slowly gained their leadership voices in the churches and in the marketplace, but they soon faced endless barriers that prevented them from advancing in leadership due to the gender-biased myths, expectations, regulations, and work environments that favored male leadership. Although an increasing number of women with higher education are entering the workforce, they continue to experience various overt and covert biases based on gender. Unfortunately, churches are not exempt from such gender discrimination against women.

The ongoing debate regarding women's role in leadership generates varying reactions based on the competing egalitarian and complementarian views, contributing to the never-ceasing tension between men and women called to leadership. As more female leaders enter the

leadership world, the championing practices of male leaders will become ever more critical. Male allies or advocates can challenge the systemic barriers by intentionally creating a gender-inclusive leadership culture so that both men and women can thrive, fellowship, and collaborate in God's redemptive work.

Since men occupy most of the top leadership, they are uniquely positioned to champion women by implementing the following three strategies: (1) championing mindset through the lens of gender intelligence and restored siblinghood in Christ, (2) championing method through a gender-inclusive T.E.A.M.ing model, and (3) championing metamorphosis by frequently evaluating and re-evaluating the complex process of inclusive leadership to equip male leaders to move from unawareness toward normalization of female leadership at every level.

The AG has been supporting female ministers since its inception in 1914 based on their sound biblical exegesis and theological conviction. Unfortunately, the lived experiences of many female ministers contradict their official position. Thus far, the conversations around gender-inclusive leadership and cross-gender ministry collaboration, fellowship, and mentorship have been either limited or avoided due to various challenges such as the #MeToo and #ChurchToo movements and the compromised moral and sexual integrity of prominent spiritual leaders. Meanwhile, God continues to call both men and women as co-laborers for His divine redemptive work. Although not all men will be allies or advocates for women in ministry, the health of the Church depends on a few brave male leaders known as countercultural male champions. They are the key to transforming the AG's leadership culture and future so that anyone called by God can fulfill the Great Commission according to the *missio Dei*.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROJECT NARRATIVE AND FIELD WORK

Introduction

Chapter two established a theological and biblical perspective on male allyship for women in ministry and explored the best and worst practices in the marketplace, the church, and para-church organizations. This project will seek to identify proven championing practices through an anonymous online survey of a selected group of contemporary AG male champions who actively train, empower, affirm/advocate for, and mentor women in ministry. The researcher will examine the common themes rising from their responses regarding the perception of women in ministry and practices of gender inclusive ministry leadership, discipleship, and fellowship.

Research Methodology

Research context

Previous research on the topic of women in ministry focused on the ministry experiences of female leaders to raise awareness of the gender disparity in leadership, the gap between egalitarian theology and ministry practices, and the common challenges or obstacles female ministers face in a predominantly male leadership culture. These studies, ranging across various denominations, traditions, and cultures, provide great insight into the perpetuating problems while raising an important task of finding solutions to help foster a gender inclusive leadership culture and collaborative ministerial practices.

This project seeks to provide solutions by observing the common championing practices of current male allies or advocates. A fifty-question qualitative survey will be emailed to a selected group of AG male ministers. Their responses will provide a proven pathway that male leaders can apply directly in their contexts to train, empower, affirm/advocate for, and mentor women called to ministerial leadership. The survey questions will be formulated from the guiding research question: How can male leaders successfully champion female ministers in the AG U.S.A.?

Research participants

The project will conduct online qualitative research by surveying a selected group of credentialed male ministers in the AG. The identical survey link will be sent to two groups. The first group will consist of twenty-two male ministers who participated in a previous doctoral qualitative survey[1] (identified as active champions by their female mentees). These twenty-two men (out of thirty-nine respondents; 56.4 percent) expressed their willingness to participate in further study by providing their email addresses. The second group will include an additional twenty-five AG district/network male superintendents, who will be invited to take the survey to share their perspectives and experiences as male allies or advocates for women called to ministerial leadership. While they may champion women differently, these superintendents collaboratively worked on the resource called, "Female Lead Pastors: A Discussion Worth Having," to address why and how to discover, develop, and deploy women as high-level

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[1] The previous online qualitative survey was part of the researcher's doctoral study completed in April 2021. Thirty-nine active male mentors—identified by their female mentees currently serving in various AG leadership roles—shared their observations regarding women in ministry and experiences of cross-gender training, mentoring, and collaboration. Saehee Duran, "A Contextual Study: Male Empowering and Advocating for Women in Ministry Leaderships" (doctoral term paper, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL, 2021).

ministerial leaders from the egalitarian perspective.[2] According to Rev. Gene Roncone, Superintendent of Rocky Mountain Ministry Network, this resource had more than 6,000 shares in just eight weeks.[3]

Instruments used in data collection

This project will conduct qualitative research by utilizing the Google Forms online survey platform. The link will be shared via two group emails (one for the twenty-two men from the preliminary survey and the other for the twenty-five district/network superintendents). In addition, the link will be shared in a private Facebook group for superintendents through the assistance of a male champion who is part of the group. The survey will contain fifty questions divided into six categories (see Appendix A):

1. Ten questions on the participant's demographics

2. Five questions on the participant's personal history

3. Ten questions on the participant's ministry/organizational context

4. Ten questions on the participant's training and mentoring perception and practices

5. Ten questions on the participant's empowering and advocating perception and practices

6. Five open-ended questions for the participant to provide additional insight on male champions and gender-inclusive leadership in ministry

The survey responses will be collected at google.com/forms where data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Google Forms does not collect identifying information

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[2] "Female Lead Pastors: A Discussion Worth Having," a collaborative resource by AG district/network superintendents curated by Gene Roncone, September 2021, http://www.agspe.org/20210912_FLP.pdf.

[3] Gene Roncone, information shared in a private email to the researcher, December 11, 2022.

such as participants' names, email addresses, or IP addresses. The records of this study will be kept private and stored on a password protected computer. Only the researcher and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed five years after the study has been completed.

Survey questions and procedures

The descriptive survey will contain forty-five multiple-choice and scaling questions and five open-ended questions. The demographics section will ask about their age, current ministry position and credential (i.e., ordained, licensed, certified, or N/A), leadership tenure, educational background, and marital status. If married, then follow-up questions will ask about their spouses' ministerial credential status and leadership involvement in the church or marketplace. The survey will ask the same questions for those who have a daughter. Questions about participant wives and daughters will reveal any correlation between their championing practices and their exposure to female leadership at home.

The second category of the survey will contain five questions on personal history. This section will gather information about the participants' first encounter with visible female leadership, their mother's influence as a leader, personal experiences of serving under a female leader, the practice of hiring a woman into decision-making leadership, and their attitude toward female ministers. The participants' responses will demonstrate how their past interactions with female leaders contribute to their conscious, subconscious, or unconscious role as male allies or advocates for female ministers today.

The third category of the survey will contain ten questions related to the participants' current ministry context. This section will ask respondents to assess their organizational culture

regarding gender inclusiveness evidenced by female representation and visibility in leadership, the influence of female ministers in decision making process, consistency between women's leadership titles and roles, the pay rate disparity based on gender, the practice of onboarding women at all levels of leadership, and the location of their organization.

The fourth category of the survey will inquire about the respondents' championing practices through training and mentoring women. Participants will indicate whether they currently have one or more female mentors and mentees, the last time they met with female leaders specifically for developing their leadership skills or sharing relevant resources, a preferred setting when meeting with a female minister, a preferred method of setting up a meeting with their mentees, and the impact of the #MeToo and #ChurchToo movement on their willingness to train or mentor women in ministry. In addition, they will be asked three questions regarding the frequency of their approach to initiating a meeting with female ministers, inviting them to social gatherings such as casual lunch, and hesitating to offer honest feedback. Survey respondents will indicate their responses in one of the following options: always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never.

The fifth category of the survey will contain ten questions designed to assess the respondents' empowering and advocating practices to advance women in ministerial leadership. Four scaling questions ask about the frequency of public affirmation of female ministers, private advocation among other men, inviting female ministers to social networking events for greater social exposure, and recommending their names as keynote speakers for large events. They will indicate their answers on a scaling line somewhere between always and never. Another question will ask about their direct involvement with making a systemic or organizational change. Participants will choose their answers from one of the following options: "yes," "no," or "I

would, but I never had a chance." The rest of the questions will ask how much they agree or

disagree with the stated assumptions relevant to empowering and advocating for women

ministers. These questions include the following:

1. Reforming the male-dominated leadership culture to become more gender-inclusive will empower women to lead throughout the different stages of womanhood (e.g., pregnancy).

2. Men should call out fellow male colleagues for making misogynist or gender-biased statements about female ministers.

3. Male and female ministers in the Assemblies of God are equally empowered and advocated by their mentors for leadership development, advancement, and opportunities.

4. While women can champion women in leadership, men are better positioned to empower and advocate for women to the next level of leadership today.

5. Gender-inclusive language, both written and verbal, is essential to empowering, advocating, and normalizing female leadership.

The final category of the survey will include five open-ended questions to gather

additional insight on the strategies to increase the number of male champions, to decrease blind

spots in gender inclusive ministerial leadership development and collaboration, and to improve

practices of ethnical cross-gender professional relationships. Respondents will have an

opportunity to further expand on their previous thoughts or provide new information in the final

open-ended question.

This qualitative survey will be action research oriented, by seeking to identify,

understand, and solve the pervasive problem of gender disparity in ministerial leadership and by

observing the proven championing practices of the contemporary AG male allies and advocates.

All fifty questions are optional, and the respondents are free to skip any questions or not

complete the survey

Narrative Description of Project Execution

Gathering survey data

The forty-seven AG male advocates or allies will receive a survey link via email on December 10, 2021. The researcher will send an email to twenty-two male ministers who provided their email addresses in a previous study. The same email will also be sent to Gene Roncone, District Superintendent/Network Pastor of the Rocky Mountain Ministry Network, who will forward the survey link to other superintendents via email and the private Facebook group for AG superintendents. A reminder email will be sent out a month later and a follow-up email sent a week before closing the survey. Roncone will be asked to help with these reminders as well as facilitate the research importance to the superintendents. He has been a long-time advocate and ally for female ministers, so his active support is anticipated. The researcher will use email as the primary tool to communicate with him for the purpose of the survey while using other forms of communication (i.e., text messages and FB messenger) to exchange information relevant to ministry in general.[4]

Analyzing survey data

Upon closing the survey, Google Forms will automatically generate summary charts or graphs for the questions one through forty-five. The last five open-ended questions will be coded manually by the researcher according to themes rising from each question (Q46-Q50). Since the survey is anonymous, each respondent will be assigned a number according to the order of submission followed by the letter R. For instance, R01 will indicate the first respondent and R47

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[4] I initiated a contact with Gene Roncone in September 2021 shortly after he published the resource on the Female Lead Pastors, the product of collaborative efforts by the AG superintendents. Since then, I have maintained contact with him for mutual support, growth, and insight as co-laborers in Christ.

will be the last person to submit the survey. Respondents with unique perspectives, contributions, or responses will be examined individually, and any substantial observations between respondents' demographics and their comments will be noted.

The results of section one will be examined to discover any correlations between the championing practices of male allies/advocates and their demographics. The commonalities among the respondents (i.e., age, marital status, education, ministerial credential, and leadership of wife or daughter) will be highlighted to determine the unique natural characteristics of a potential male champion.

The results of section two will be analyzed to discover external influences that may have contributed to respondents' championing qualities as male allies or advocates. The assessment will provide helpful insight to environmental factors that may influence the likelihood of men becoming champions in ministry.

Section three results will reveal the health of participants' current organizations by assessing gender diversity, equity, and inclusion within leadership culture, structure, and other variables that mirror the egalitarian expressions of Christian leadership. The respondents' answers will help define a healthy organization that lives out the egalitarian theology in action and provide a new framework for AG churches, districts or networks, national office, or higher education institutions to transform their leadership dynamic to match their theological conviction.

The results of sections four and five will assess the championing strategies by analyzing how male allies and advocates train, mentor, empower, affirm/advocate for women in ministerial leadership. Responses will provide helpful solutions to recontextualize the Billy Graham Rule

(BGR) so that all servants of the Lord can engage in healthy discipleship, worship, and fellowship as co-laborers and spiritual siblings in Christ.

The final section's five open-ended questions will be evaluated by identifying the common themes from the comments to each of the following questions:

1. How can the AG reproduce and disciple more male champions like you?

2. What must male ministers know to equally train, empower, affirm/advocate, and mentor female ministers called to higher leadership?

3. What must female ministers understand about men as they lead side-by-side with their male colleagues?

4. How do you practice ethical cross-gender mentorship while honoring each other's integrity, purity, credibility, and reputation?

5. Any other final thoughts or wisdom on male allyship for female ministers?

Questions do not have a length requirement, and participants have the option to not respond. Their responses will offer proven solutions to the perpetuating problem of gender disparity in ministry. Gathering this information on the perspective of various male respondents on how to increase male allies or advocates, overcome gender-biased leadership culture, and redeem and restore fear-based cross-gender mentorship will help cultivate a healthy, intentional, and ethnical partnership between men and women called to ministerial leadership. The responses to the third question will provide valuable insight (i.e., privileged knowledge of the men's world) that female ministers are unable to get otherwise. The overall assessment of this section will provide guiding principles that will benefit the future work of male and female ministers in the spirit of unity, respect, grace, and love. Upon analyzing the survey data by each section, the entire responses will be coded by themes. These themes will be evaluated and categorized according to the guiding question: How can male leaders successfully champion female ministers in the Assemblies of God U.S.A.?

Summary

Using Google Forms, this research will utilize an anonymous survey to explore how male allies or advocates can successfully champion female ministers in their ministerial journey in the AG. The descriptive survey will contain fifty questions, and the survey link will be sent electronically to forty-seven AG male allies or advocates currently serving in various leadership roles. Their responses will identify common characteristics of male allies or advocates and the proven championing practices to advance women in ministerial leadership. The survey outcomes will be developed into a series of podcasts for the Network of Women Ministers to resource aspiring male champions to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:19) alongside their spiritual sisters and co-laborers in Christ. The primary goal of this project is to offer action steps for aspiring male champions to implement in their immediate contexts to remove gender barriers for female ministers.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT EVALUATED

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the essential roles of male allies or advocates by observing the common championing practices of current AG male ministers from various backgrounds. The online qualitative survey via Google Forms contained fifty questions divided into six categories. These questions were formulated based on the guiding research question: How can male leaders successfully champion female ministers in the AG U.S.A.?

1. Ten questions on the participant's demographics

2. Five questions on the participant's personal history

3. Ten questions on the participant's ministry/organizational context

4. Ten questions on the participant's training and mentoring perception and practices

5. Ten questions on the participant's empowering and advocating perception and practices

6. Five open-ended questions for the participant to provide additional insight on male champions and gender-inclusive leadership in ministry

The survey link was emailed to a group of forty-seven male AG ministers on December 10, 2021, followed by a reminder email sent on January 19. Gene Roncone, Superintendent of Rocky Mountain Ministry Network, forwarded the link to other district superintendents via email and a private Facebook group. The survey was closed on January 23. Twenty-nine out of forty-seven male ministers (61.7 percent) responded to the survey. Since all questions were optional, two respondents skipped a few questions for unknown reasons (they were in the age group of the

50s and 60s, respectively). All survey participants submitted their responses, including these two

men who did not complete the entire questionnaire (see Appendix B for survey results).

The survey results provided new insight into contributing factors of male allyship,

healthy gender-inclusive ministry contexts and practices, and other practical steps that aspiring

male champions can apply directly in their ministry contexts to train, empower, affirm/advocate

for, and mentor women called to ministerial leadership.

Analysis of Data

Since the survey was anonymous, each respondent was assigned a number according to the order

of submission preceded by the letter R. For instance, R01 indicates the first respondent and R29

refers to the last respondent. Google Forms automatically created summary charts and graphs for

the forty-five multiple choice or scaling questions. The responses to the last five open-ended

questions were grouped into five age categories (i.e., 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s+) and evaluated

both individually and collectively. Individual evaluations identified unique perspectives within

their age groups, and the collective evaluations provided common themes relevant to male

allyship, gender inclusive ministerial leadership, and ethical cross-gender mentorship.

Participants' demographics

The first category asked ten questions about the participants' demographics. The respondents

were diverse in ages and ministerial roles. Question 1 inquired about their age. The largest group

of respondents were those in the age group 60s ($n = 10$), and the second largest were in the age

group 50s ($n = 7$). These two age groups made up more than half of the respondents (59 percent).

Men in the age groups 30s and 40s constituted less than a quarter of the respondents ($n = 7$ or 24

percent). While there are twenty-nine respondents who completed the survey, R28 and R29

provided identical demographic information. But since there were differences in some of the

responses, the researcher included both results in the analysis.

Table 4.1 Age Demographics

Age Range	percentage	# of Respondents
30s	13.8 %	4
40s	10.3 %	3
50s	24.1 %	7
60s	34.5 %	10
70s or above	17.2 %	5
Total	100 %	29

Question 2 asked about the respondent's current ministerial position. District leaders

represented more than half the respondents (55 percent), and local church pastors were the next

largest group (24 percent). The rest of the respondents (21 percent) included educators in

Christian schools, missionaries, a chaplain, a retiree, and a national leader. There was at least one

district leader in each age group, but most of them were above the age of fifty. When asked about

their ministerial leadership tenure (Q4), more than three-quarters of them reported that they

served at least twenty-one years. Twenty-four percent of the total respondents served longer than

forty years.

Question 5 asked about their educational backgrounds. All twenty-nine respondents were

educated with at least some college education. Forty-five percent of them had post-graduate

degrees followed by 31 percent of them with graduate degrees. These two groups made up more

than three quarters (76 percent) of the respondents, who were in their 50s, 60s, and 70s. The

remaining seven respondents had either undergraduate degrees (10 percent) or some college

education (14 percent). Three out of four men in the youngest group were from the last category.

The older respondents (50s and above) had more education than those in the age groups 40s and 30s.

All respondents were ordained (Q3) and married (Q6). Eighty-three percent of them were married to the wives who served in leadership either in the church or marketplace (Q8), and less than half of their wives (45 percent) were non-credentialed ministers (Q7). Such outcomes indicated that being married to a non-credentialed wife was not a determining factor for allyship, although a wife with leadership qualities or experience outside the home seems to affect it positively.

Q8. Does your wife serve in a leadership capacity, either in church or marketplace?
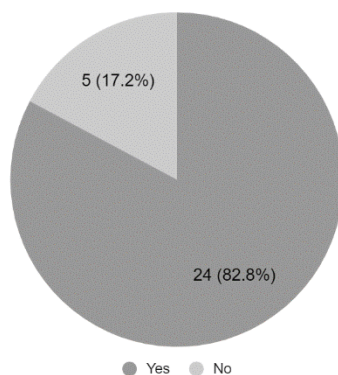

Figure 4.1 Wives with Leadership Influence Outside Home (Q8)

Eighty-six percent of the respondents indicated they have a daughter (Q9), and almost 70 percent of them are leading in the church or marketplace (Q10). Their responses to questions 7 through 10 demonstrated that a man with a working/leading wife or daughter tends to be a natural champion. The exposure to daily female leadership at home through the examples of their wives or daughters may be linked to their natural tendency to champion female ministers by normalizing female leadership at all levels.
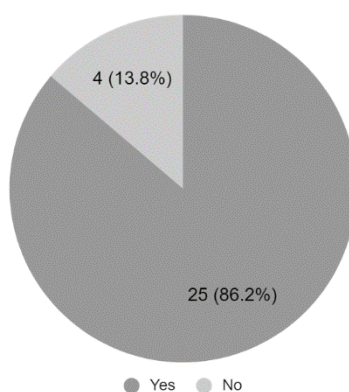
Q9. Do you have a daughter?

Figure 4.2 Male Allies with Leading or Working Daughters (Q9)

Participants' personal histories

The second category contained five questions to examine if their allyship practices were influenced by personal history. Question 11 asked, "When was your earliest exposure to 'visible' female leadership in ministry?" Fifty-nine percent of them were exposed during early childhood, 24 percent during youth, 10 percent during adulthood, and 7 percent during young adulthood. This result demonstrated the importance of early exposure to visible female leadership for the championing role of future male allies or advocates. Only one respondent (out of fifteen) in the age categories of 60s and above indicated he was exposed to visible female leadership during adulthood, which implied that female ministry leaders were active in the 1950s or 1960s. However, even though these men grew up seeing female ministers at an early age, there was a great dissonance between their egalitarian belief and practices of training and mentoring female ministers based on their responses to questions 26 through 35. More analysis will follow in the subsequent pages.

Question 12 asked if they saw their mothers serving in leadership outside their homes growing up. Seventy-two percent of the respondents answered affirmatively. This outcome

showed that while growing up in a family with a working mom is not a determining factor for

male allyship, it has significant impact on how men normalize, value, and invest in female

ministers in later years. Question 13 asked if they ever served under or reported to a female

leader. "The results were divided with 52 percent responding "yes" and 48 percent responding

"no". Their responses showed no clear evidence that working under a female leader was a

necessary pre-requisite for effective allyship.

Question 14 asked, "Have you ever hired a woman with decision-making authority for

your organization?" Twenty-seven (93 percent) respondents replied "yes." Although two men

(R19 and R24) indicated they have not, this may not mean their lack of willingness or failure to

champion female ministers through other means. One respondent (R19), a district leader in his

40s from Colorado, proved he was a healthy example of a male champion. Although he did not

have any daughter and his wife was not credentialed or had any leadership capacity in the church

or marketplace, he was exposed to visible female leadership during early childhood, served

under female leadership, saw his mother's leadership outside the home, and always held an

egalitarian view. His personal efforts to champion women in ministerial leadership were

exemplary, but he reported that his organization does not intentionally hire women, compensate

them fairly compared to their male counterparts, and properly grants promotions to women who

qualify (Q24).

Another respondent (R24) had the similar background and history as R19, except he was

in the age group 70s or above. He reported investing regularly into one or more female mentees

(Q27) and often initiated training or mentoring opportunities for them (Q30). Even though his

organization intentionally hired women, strategically trained or mentored them for higher

leadership, and even compensated them fairly, it failed to offer promotions to deserving women

or inviting women to social or networking activities. Their responses revealed that unhealthy organizational culture can unintentionally stifle potential allyship for aspiring female leaders or lose the benefits of increased creativity and productivity of a diverse team.

Question 15 asked how respondents' views on female ministerial leadership changed over time. Ninety-six percent of the respondents said they have always held an egalitarian view ($n = 21$). Only one respondent (R25) claimed that his view changed from complementarianism to egalitarianism. He was a local pastor in his 30s with some college education. Although his wife was a credentialed AG minister and served in leadership either in the church or marketplace, his delayed exposure to female leadership in young adulthood (instead of early childhood or youth) and the lack of public leadership of his mother in upbringing may have changed his earlier view on women's limited role in ministerial leadership.

Participants' ministry/organizational contexts

The third category asked ten questions regarding their current ministerial contexts. Question 16 asked, "Do you currently lead or serve in a gender-inclusive organization?" Twenty-eight respondents indicated they do. One respondent (R22) differed in his response, who was the only district leader in the 30s age category from Washington/North Idaho area. However, he contradicted himself in his response to question 24 that asked about gender-inclusive practices at all levels of leadership in his current organization. He indicated positively to every aspect of that question, noting that his organization intentionally hires, trains, mentors, compensates, promotes, and invites to women social-networking gatherings. Based on his other responses, it seemed R22 may have mistakenly answered "no'" to question 16.

Q16. Do you currently lead or serve in a
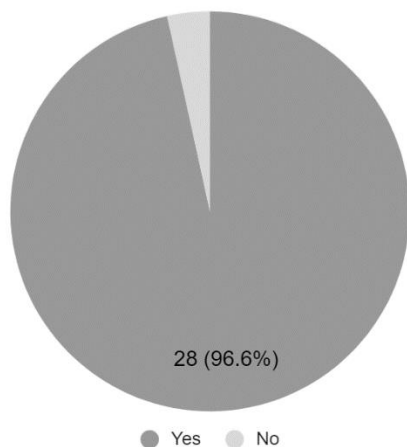gender-inclusive organization?

28 (96.6%)

● Yes ● No

Q17. Do women represent a third or more
of your leadership team?

11 (37.9%)

17 (58.6%)

● Yes ● I don't know ● No

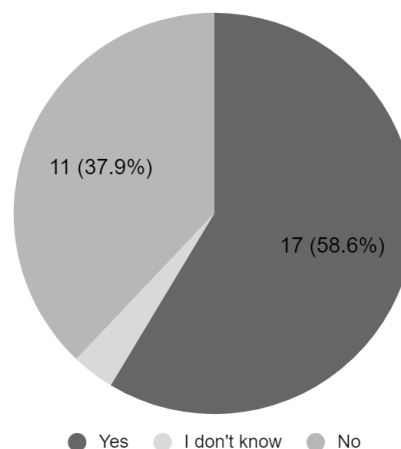Figure 4.3 Gender-Inclusive Perception (Q16)

Figure 4.4 Gender-Inclusive Reality (Q17)

Only 59 percent of the respondents (*n* = 17) indicated that women represented a third or

more of their leadership teams (Q17), which demonstrated a gap between their perception of

gender inclusivity and the reality. According to Annis and Nesbitt, 30 percent is a tipping point

for equitable representation of women in leadership.[1] The results of questions 16 and 17

suggested that the dichotomy between the positive perception of gender inclusivity and the

contradicting lived experiences of women may be a contributing factor to tokenism.

Questions 18 through 23 inquired about women's ministry preparedness, participation,

presence, and pay rate in their organizations. The results of question 18 showed that 90 percent

of the respondents indicated their female leaders were credentialed ministers (*n* = 26), while 7

percent of them stated, "some do, some do not" (*n* = 2). A retired man in his 70s (R02) reported

he did not know. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents reported that women in their

leadership team had voting rights or decision-making authority (Q19) and clear roles that

reflected their titles (Q20). All respondents indicated that women in their leadership team had

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[1] Barbara Annis and Richard Nesbitt, *Results at the Top: Using Gender Intelligence to Create Breakthrough Growth*, 1st ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 49, 84.

regular visibility (Q21), although the last question did not specify the different levels of visibility. A consistent presence in a hallway or an office is different from having a visible representation in meetings or events where women can contribute and participate, not just observe, or serve behind the scenes.

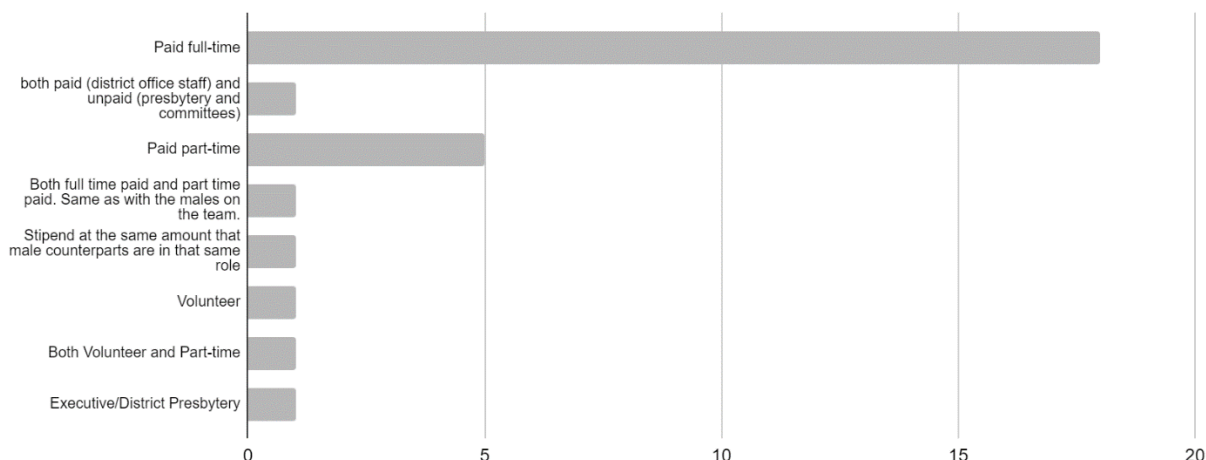Q22. In what capacities do your female ministers/leaders serve in your organization?

Figure 4.5 Female Ministers/Leaders and Pay (Q22)

Question 22 asked, "In what capacities do your female ministers/leaders serve in your organization?" All except two respondents indicated with answers ranging from receiving a stipend to full-time compensation. A district leader from Idaho (R16) noted women worked as volunteers in his organization, and a district leader based in Colorado (R19) reported the women in his organization serve in the executive/district presbytery. When asked if the women on their leadership teams got paid equitably as their counterparts (Q23), 97 percent indicated they did. A district leader in the 60s age group (R27), who did not specify his ministry area, was the only one who answered, "no."

Q24. How does your organization practice gender-inclusiveness at all levels of leadership? (select all that apply)

Figure 4.1 Gender-Inclusive Leadership Practices at All Levels (Q24)

Question 24 asked, "How does your organization practice gender inclusiveness at all levels of leadership?" The respondents were allowed to choose multiple options. As Figure 4.6 demonstrates, most of their organizations hired women at a better rate than advancing them in the leadership pipeline. The lack of strategic training or mentoring for higher leadership and the exclusion of women from social or professional networking events to build relationships for potential new hires or promotions seems to contribute to a broken rung on a leadership ladder. The responses to this question revealed the importance of ongoing training, mentoring, and advocating for female employees for enduring success, growth, and advancement in their leadership journey. Without intentional ongoing support, the gap between hiring women and promoting them into rightful leadership positions will remain wide.

Table 4.3 Locations of Respondents' Organizations on the US Map

MO	NY	CO	KY	MI	ND	WA/ N. ID	Opted Out	AK	CA	ID	IL	NC	OH	TX	WI	Retired
4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

The final question (Q25) under the third category of ministerial context asked about the location of their organization. Two respondents opted out. One respondent (R02) indicated he was retired. The rest of the respondents represented diverse areas across the United States. The states with the most representations were Missouri and New York.
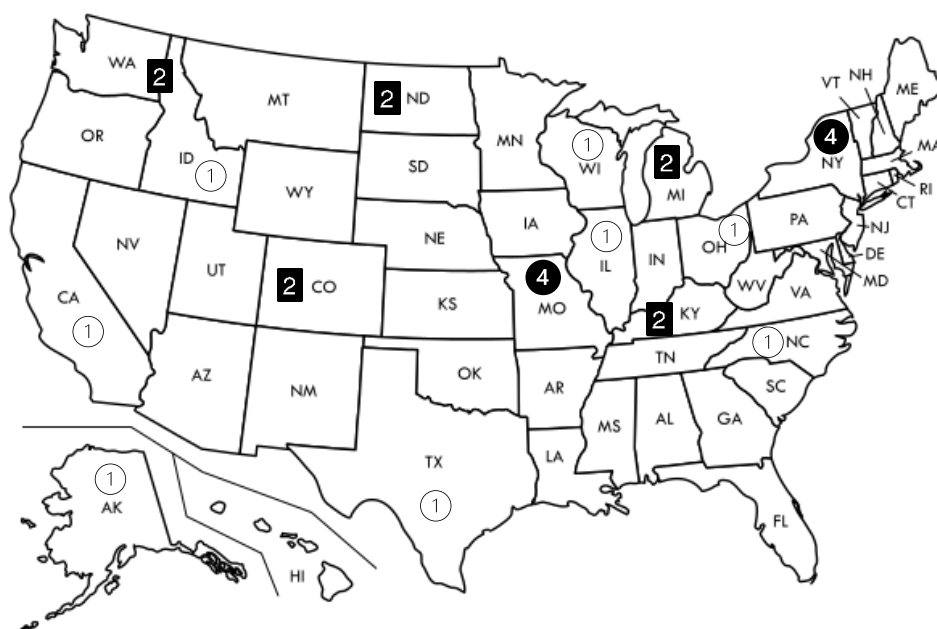

Figure 4.7 Locations of the Respondents' Organizations (Q25)

Participants' training and mentoring practices

The fourth category of the survey inquired about the respondents' championing practices through training and mentoring women. Question 26 asked, "Do you currently have one or more trustworthy female mentors (including peer mentors)?" Forty-eight percent of the respondents said "yes," while 52 percent said "no." The respondents in their 30s were the only group with a unanimous "no" (R05, R22, R23, and R25). The results showed no significant difference between the two responses, which suggests having a female mentor is not a determining factor for male allyship.

When asked if they had one or more female mentees whom they invest in regularly (Q27), 83 percent (*n* = 24) of them said "yes," and 17 percent (*n* = 5) said "no." Of the five men who reported having no female mentees, four were district leaders (two in the age group 50s and two in the age group 60s), and one was a chaplain in the age group 40s. All respondents in the youngest and the oldest age groups reported that they regularly invest in female mentees. Based on the responses to questions 26 and 27, more men were mentoring women than being mentored by women.

The rest of the questions in the fourth category (Q28-Q35) inquired about the best training and mentoring practices in cross-gender leadership contexts based on the respondents' lived experiences. Three respondents (R13, R17, and R26) did not respond to all questions in this category. These men were all district leaders representing the age groups of the 40s, 60s, and 50s, respectively. The reason for their lack of participation in these questions is unknown.

Questions 28 and 29 asked about the frequency of training and mentoring practices. The respondents could choose one of the following answers: less than a week ago, less than a month ago, less than six months ago, less than a year ago, or more than a year ago.
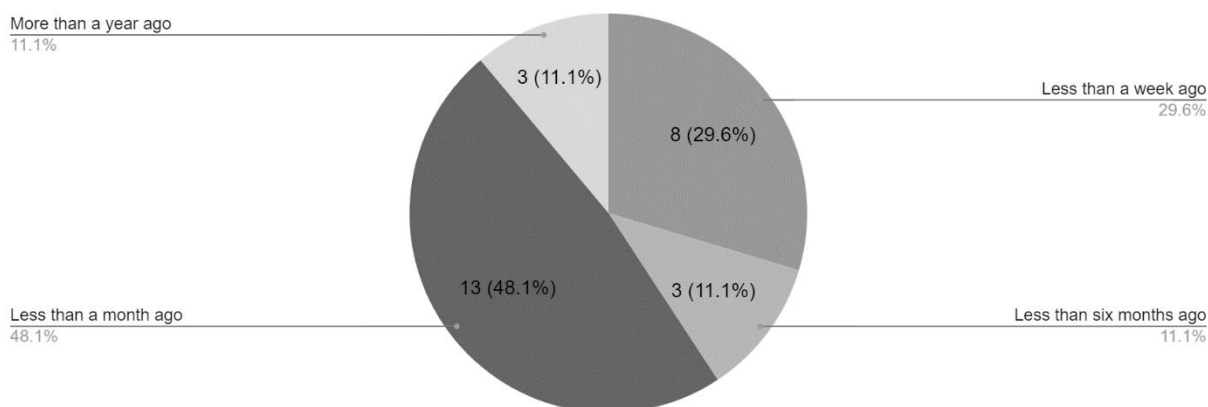

Figure 4.8 Frequency of Training and Mentoring (Q28)

Question 28 asked, "When was the last time you met with one of your female mentees to specifically train or mentor her in ministerial leadership?" Two people opted out (R17 and R26). Forty-eight percent of the twenty-seven respondents met with a female mentee less than a month ago, and 11 percent of them less than a week ago. Nearly 60 percent of respondents met with their female mentees frequently and regularly.

Q29. When was the last time you shared leadership resources with your female mentee that address her passion and goals (e.g., books, seminars, training events, etc.)?
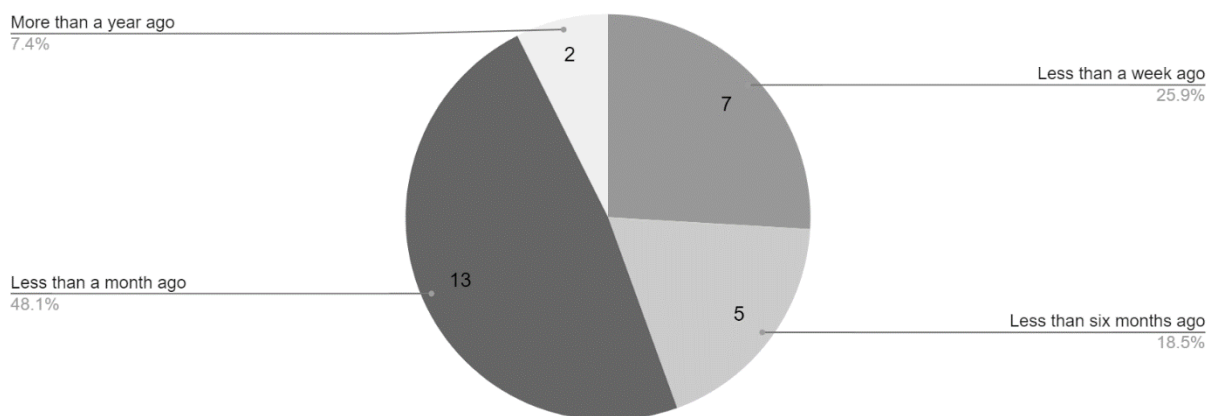

Figure 4.9 Frequency of Sharing Practical Leadership Resources (Q29)

Question 29 asked, "When was the last time you shared leadership resources with your female mentee to address her passion and goals?" The same two respondents opted out. Forty-eight percent of the respondents said they shared relevant leadership resources such as books, seminars, training events, etc. "less than a month ago" while 26 percent reported they did so "less than a week ago." Based on their responses to questions 28 and 29, active male allies or advocates frequently and regularly met with their female mentees and shared practical resources relevant to their passions and goals. The most common frequency of meetings was monthly.

Question 30 asked, "How often do you initiate training or mentoring opportunities for female mentees?" One respondent (R26) opted out. Twenty-eight respondents chose one of the following answers: always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never. Sixty-four percent of the

respondents indicated they either always (14 percent) or often (50 percent) initiate training or mentoring female mentees. Meanwhile, R7, R17, and R21 reported that they never initiated. These men were in the age groups 50s and 60s and led as a district leader or an educator. However, these men later expressed willingness to mentor them in small groups or be flexible with their preference depending on the needs of their mentees (Q33).
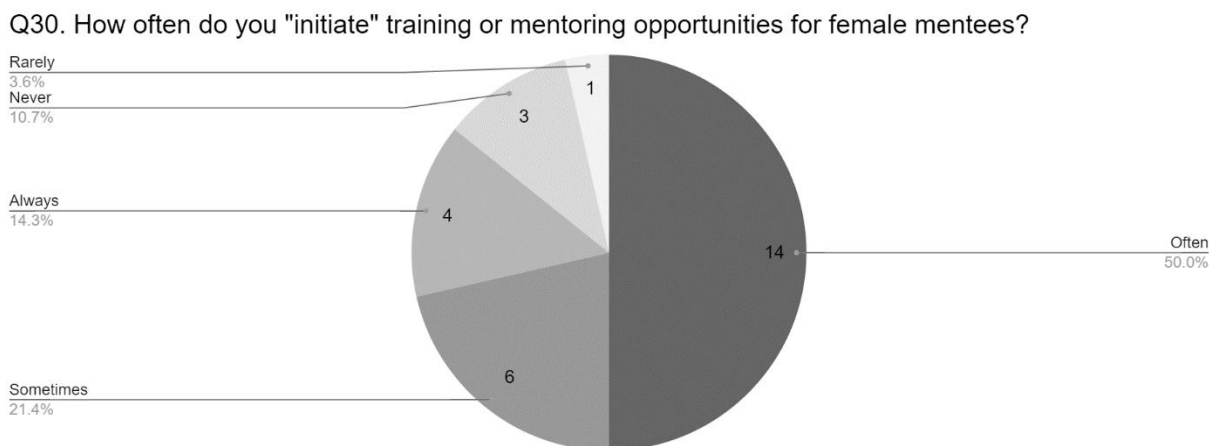

Figure 4.10 Frequency of Initiating Formal Training or Mentoring (Q30)

Question 31 asked, "How often do you invite your female mentees to lunch (a casual meeting outside the church) as you would with their male counterparts where informal mentoring occurs?" Two respondents (R13 and R26) opted out. According to the responses, male ministers in the age group 60s were least likely to engage female mentees in casual settings, who made up the largest age demographic of the respondents. As shown in Figure 4.10, only four out of twenty-seven respondents (14 percent) "always" or "often" initiated meetings with female mentees in a casual setting. In comparison, 48 percent ($n =13$) of them said they "rarely" or "never" engage in informal mentoring situations.

Q31. How often do you invite your female mentees to lunch (a casual meeting outside church) as you would with their male counterparts where informal mentoring occurs?
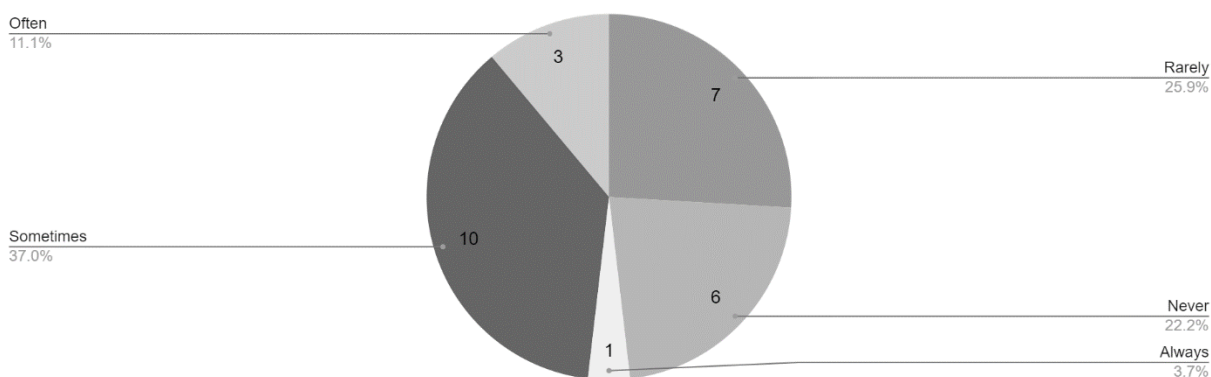

Figure 4.11 Frequency Initiating Informal Mentoring (Q31)

Among that 48 percent, nearly half of them ($n =$6) said they "never" engage female mentees in informal mentoring settings (R04, R07, R17, R20, R28, and R29). All of them were in the age group 60s, except for R07, who was in the age group 50s. Likewise, the other half of 48 percent ($n = $7) who answered "rarely" were older men. Four respondents were in the age group 60s (R01, R09, R15, and R27), and the other three respondents represented the age groups of 70s (R02), 50s (R16), and 40s (R3).

The outcomes of questions 30 and 31 revealed a notable contrast. While about 15 percent of the respondents reported they "rarely" or "never" initiate meetings with female mentees for training or mentoring (Q30), the same number of men reported that they "always" or "often" invite women to informal training or mentoring opportunities. The differences between these two outcomes demonstrated that male ministers were more likely to initiate training or mentoring female mentees if the context was less private or casual.

Question 32 asked, "How often do you hesitate to offer honest feedback to your female mentees to avoid hurting their feelings or affecting their confidence?" Two respondents (R17 and R26) opted out. Sixty-seven percent of the twenty-seven respondents reported they rarely or never hesitate, seven percent ($n =$2) indicated they often felt hesitant, but none said they always

felt hesitant. Such outcomes demonstrated men's willingness to advance quality women to

higher leadership in ministry, who need transparent feedback from their male mentors to help

them grow in their character, leadership, and call to lead.

        Question 33 asked, "When mentoring a female minister, which is the most preferred

setting for you?" One respondent (R17) opted out. The respondents chose one of the following

options: one-to-one, one-to-some (the inner circle), one-to-many (conference style), or depends

on the needs of mentees. While 39 percent ($n = 11$) of them preferred small groups, 57 percent ($n

= 16$) of the respondents indicated they were willing to be flexible with mentoring settings

depending on the mentees' needs.

Q33. When mentoring a female minister, which is the most preferred setting for you?
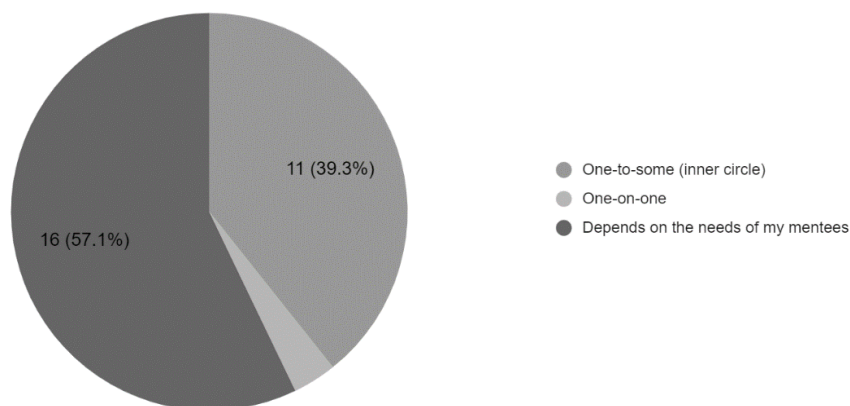

Figure 4.12 Preferred Setting for Mentoring a Female Minister (Q33)

        A retired minister (R02), one of the six respondents who said he would never initiate a

casual or informal meeting with a female mentee in question 3, was the only one who favored a

one-to-one setting for mentoring a female minister. However, he was also one of the six

respondents who said he would never initiate a casual or informal meeting with a female mentee

in question 31. The discrepancy in his responses may be because question 31 used "lunch" as an

example of informal mentoring. Although R02 would not initiate lunch meetings with women,

he seemed comfortable meeting with them privately in a more formal setting. None of the respondents viewed "one-to-many" (conference type) as the optimal mentoring option.

Question 34 and 35 measured the accessibility of the male allies to their female mentees. Question 34 asked, "How do your female mentees typically schedule a meeting with you?" One respondent (R17) opted out. The respondents could select the best answer out of four options: through an assistant, through a wife, personal email, or personal cell phone (text and call).

Q34. How do your female mentees typically schedule a meeting with you? (Select the best answer)
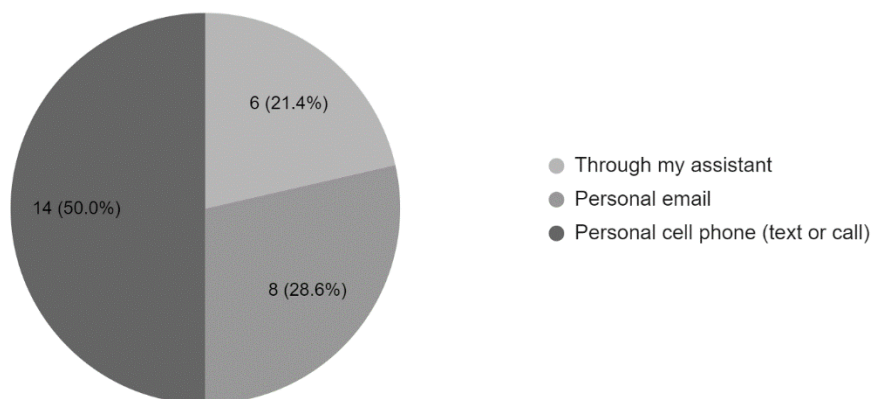

Figure 4.13 Accessibility When Scheduling a Meeting with Female Mentees (Q34)

Fifty percent of the respondents indicated they are accessible to their female mentees via personal cell phones (see Figure 4.13). Twenty-nine percent of them preferred personal emails to schedule a meeting. Accordingly, nearly 80 percent of them made themselves easily accessible to their female mentees. Twenty-one percent ($n = 6$) of them said the best way to schedule a meeting is through their assistants. Of those six individuals, four were district leaders, one was a national leader, and the last was a local pastor. Five were 60 years old or older (R01, R12, R15, R18, and R20). One respondent, a district leader in the age group 30s (R22), preferred scheduling a meeting through his assistant. Although others in his age group preferred direct

texts or calls, his role as a district leader seemed to necessitate a more formal method. None of the respondents indicated making an appointment through their wives was the best option.

Question 35 asked, "Do you feel the #MeToo or #ChurchToo movements influence your willingness to train and mentor women in ministry?" One respondent, R13, opted out. Eighty-two percent ($n = 23$) of respondents answered "no" while 18 percent ($n = 5$) of them said "yes." All of them were district leaders: two were in the age group 60s (R01, R17), two in the age group 50s (R06, R16), and one in the age group 30s (R22). Twenty-three respondents (82 percent) were willing to train and mentor female mentees despite the challenges of social justice movements. However, five district leaders (18 percent) found it difficult to do so despite their position of influence at the district level.

Participants' empowering and advocating practices

The fifth category of the survey asked ten questions about the participants' practices of empowering and advocating for female ministers. Question 36 asked, "How often do you publicly affirm the leadership calling of female ministers and advocate for them?" The respondents indicated their answers on a scale of one to five where one referred to "always," and five referred to "never." All respondents indicated a high likelihood of public affirmation of female leadership (see Figure 4.14)

How often do you publicly affirm the leadership calling of female ministers and advocate for them?
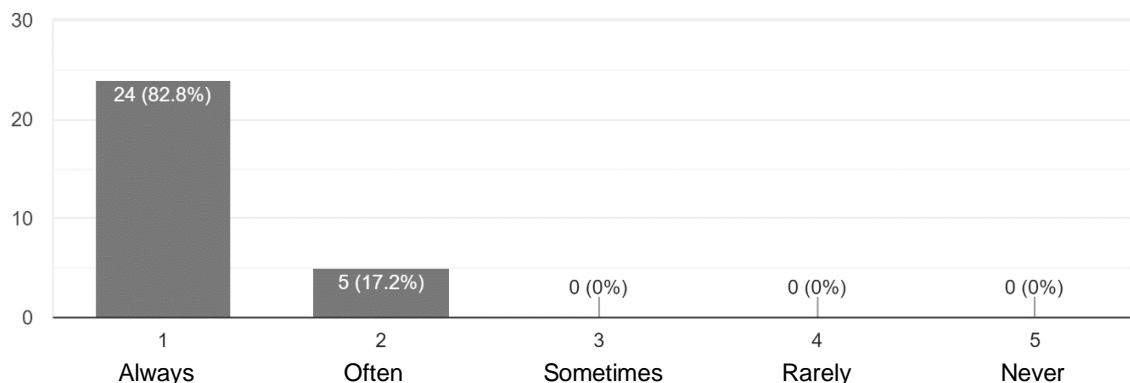29 responses

Figure 4.14 Public Affirmation of Female Ministers (Q36)

Meanwhile, fewer participants expressed their willingness to advocate or affirm female mentees when the method shifted from verbal recognition to action. Question 37 asked, "How often do you invite your female mentees to social networking events outside work to intentionally introduce them to other influencers, mentors, or champions?" On respondent (R17) opted out for an unknown reason. Fifty percent of the twenty-eight respondents noted "always" while R20 (a pastor in the age group 60s) and R27 (a district leader in the same age group) indicated the opposite sentiment.

How often do you invite your female mentees to social networking events outside work to intentionally introduce them to other influencers, mentors, or champions?
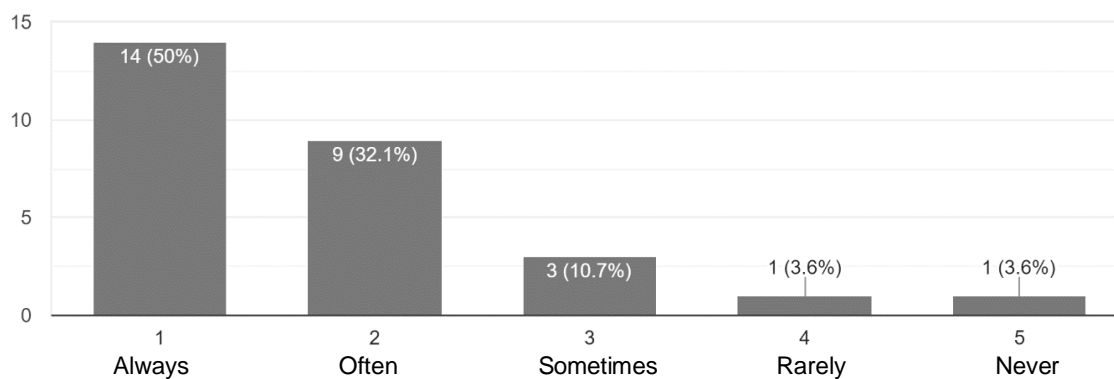28 responses

Figure 4.15 Public Affirmation through Invitation to Social-Networking Events (Q37)

The results of questions 36 and 37 demonstrated a disconnect between the perception of public affirmation of women in ministry and the practice. While all twenty-nine participants thought they were active advocates for female ministers, the results indicated otherwise when allyship involved inviting women to social networking events, essential in their leadership journey.

Question 38 asked, "How often do you talk about your female mentees in their absence among other leaders with the purpose of opening doors for them?" One respondent (R17) opted out. Once again, the responses were more favorable when involving verbal affirmation. While 89 percent ($n = 25$) of the respondents indicated on the spectrum of "always," R27 was the only one who expressed "never." Question 39 asked another question about verbal affirmation: "How often do you recommend the names of female ministers as keynote speakers when planning a church, district, or national event to normalize their visibility?" All twenty-nine respondents answered the question, and 86 percent ($n = 25$) responded positively. One respondent (R27) answered "never" but still demonstrated a lack of advocation or affirmation compared to the rest.

The responses to questions 36 through 39 revealed a gap between the perception of public affirmation for female ministers and the practices. While all participants viewed themselves as active advocates and allies (Q36), a few demonstrated hesitancy when it extended beyond verbal support. However, the overwhelming support of male advocates was evident both in words and actions.

Question 40 asked if they made any systemic or organizational change to empower and advocate for female ministers. Seventy-six percent ($n = 22$) indicated "yes," 21 percent ($n = 6$) said they would if they had a chance, and 3 percent ($n = 1$) answered "no." A district leader in the age group 50s and from Colorado and Utah area (R06) was the only one who differed from the

majority. In the final open-ended question (Q50) asking for additional insight regarding male

allyship for female ministers, R06 noted,

> I personally do not subscribe to legislative apportionment where policy or bylaws mandate a certain number of women … I would rather use other organic methods that enable female leaders to rise to leadership on their own merits while using my influence as a Superintendent to strategically match gifted and proven female leaders with win/win opportunities.

> Based on this comment, R06 was not opposing systemic or organizational changes.

Rather he preferred organic approaches by leveraging his positional influence to empower and

advocate for qualified female leaders.

The following four questions (Q41-Q45) listed a series of statements about empowering

or advocating practices and asked the participants to indicate how much they agreed with each.

No one opted out of these questions. The respondents chose one of the following answers for

each question: strongly agree, somewhat agree, agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

Question 41 stated, "Reforming the male-dominated leadership culture to become more

gender-inclusive will empower women to lead throughout the different stages of womanhood

(e.g., pregnancy)." Ninety-seven percent of the respondents ($n = 28$) noted that they agree with

the statement. A district leader (R16), in his 50s and from Idaho, answered, "somewhat

disagree."

Q41. How much do you agree with the following statement? Reforming the male-dominated leadership culture to become more gender-inclusive will empower women to lead throughout the different stages of womanhood (e.g., pregnancy).

Somewhat disagree 3.4%

Somewhat agree 27.6%
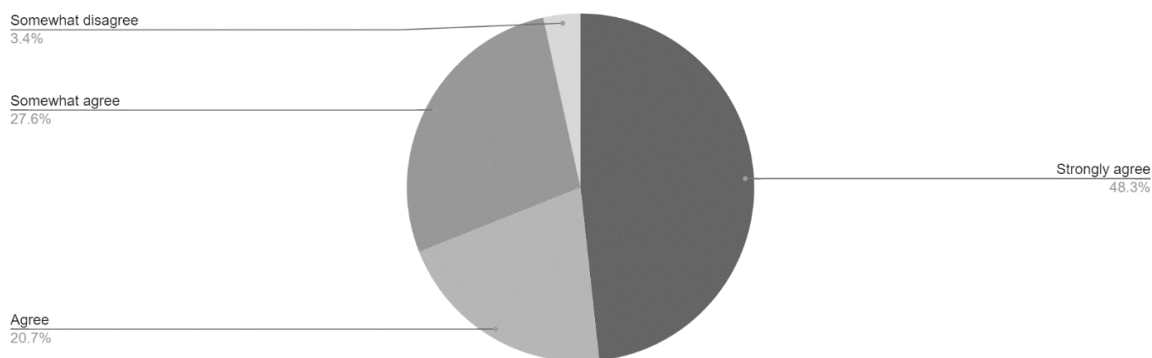
Strongly agree 48.3%

Agree 20.7%

Figure 4.16 Importance of Reforming Leadership Culture to be Gender-Inclusive (Q41)

Ninety-seven percent of the respondents believed that gender-inclusive leadership culture would empower female leaders to remain in leadership throughout different seasons of womanhood. Nearly all participants agreed that reforming leadership culture by moving away from a male-centric leadership world is critical for empowering female ministers.

Question 42 stated, "Men should call out fellow male colleagues for making misogynist or gender-biased statements about female ministers." All respondents agreed to the statement to varying degrees. The results indicated that male ministers were aware of their positional power and willing to utilize their influence to correct the wrong, when necessary, to pave the way for female ministers to thrive in their call to ministry. No one disagreed with the men's responsibility to call out degrading

Q42. How much do you agree with the following statement? Men should call out fellow male colleagues for making misogynist or gender-biased statements about female ministers.
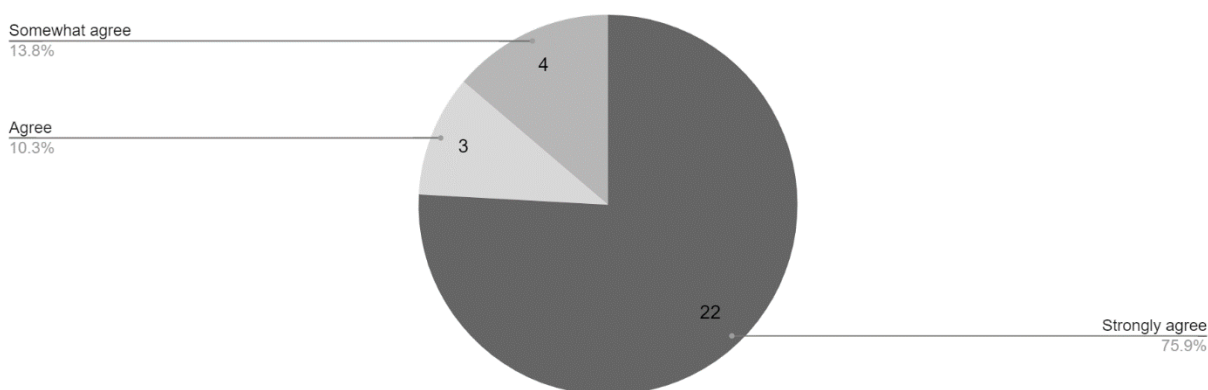
Somewhat agree
13.8%

Agree
10.3%

4

3

22

Strongly agree
75.9%

Figure 4.17 Calling Out Misogynist or Gender-biased Comments (Q42)

Question 43 stated, "Male and female ministers in the Assemblies of God are equally empowered and advocated by their mentors for leadership development, advancement, and opportunities." 83 percent of the respondents ($n = 17$) agreed with the statement while 17 percent of them ($n = 5$) disagreed. Of those who disagreed, three men were district leaders (R01, R06, R16), and two were local church pastors (R05, R11). Of these respondents, only one person was

in the youngest age group, and the rest were either in the age groups 50s or 60s. The results indicate that the younger respondents in the age groups 30s or 40s believed that men and women were empowered, advocated, and advanced equally in the AG.

According to another study conducted by the researcher, 86 percent of the AG female executive leaders claimed that advocating and empowering women on visible platforms and training for executive leadership skills are two of the greatest needs for the AG in the next five years.[2] In other words, while 83 percent of male ministers believed that leadership development, advancement, and opportunities are equally available for men and women, 86 percent of female executive ministers disagreed. There is a contrast between the men's positive outlook on a gender-inclusive leadership culture and the women's perception of non-inclusive practices.

Question 44 stated, "While women can champion women in leadership, men are better positioned to empower and advocate for women to the next level of leadership today." All but one respondent agreed to the statement. After comparison with other questions, this male leader appeared to be the frequent outlier. Furthermore, this respondent was one of the three male leaders who disagreed with the following assertion in question 45, "Gender-inclusive language, both written and verbal, is essential to empowering, advocating, and normalizing female leadership." Respondents (R28 and R29) also disagreed, who may be the identical individual based on the mirroring responses with a few exceptions. Ninety percent of the respondents agreed that gender-inclusive language is crucial for empowering and advocating for female ministers.

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[2] Saehee Duran, "The Qualitative Research on the Health of the Assemblies of God (USA) Concerning the Advancement of Female Ministers to Executive Leadership Roles" (doctoral term paper, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL, 2020), 13.

The section five analysis indicated that most male advocates or allies actively empowered women ministers through public affirmation, invitations to social-networking events, recognitions, or recommendations, and systemic or organizational changes. These male ministers also supported empowering and advocating actions by reforming the male-centric leadership culture, calling out misogynistic comments, leveraging positional power to open doors for competent female leaders, and normalizing female leadership through gender-inclusive language.

Open-ended questions on allyship and gender-inclusive ministries

The last category of the survey asked the following five open-ended questions to glean additional insight to increasing the number of male champions, decreasing the blind spots in gender-inclusive ministerial leadership development and collaboration, and improving the practices of ethical cross-gender professional relationships:

Q.46   How can the AG reproduce and disciple more male champions like you?

Q.47   What must male ministers know to equally train, empower, affirm/advocate, and mentor female ministers called to higher leadership?

Q.48   What must female ministers understand about men as they lead side-by-side with their male colleagues?

Q.49   How do you practice ethical cross-gender mentorship while honoring each other's integrity, purity, credibility, and reputation?

Q.50   Any other final thoughts or wisdom on male allyship for female ministers?

The respondents could choose to skip any questions. Respondents (R12 and R22) opted out of question 46. Twenty-seven participants shared how the AG can increase the number of male champions. Several common themes arose from their suggestions:

1. Teach egalitarian theology at an early age

2. Model egalitarian leadership in local churches

3. Hire or appoint competent women at all levels of church leadership

4. Increase the awareness of gender biases and blind spots through training/education and candid conversations

5. Model or advocate for visible female leadership at the top (e.g., local church, district/network, and national levels)

6. Train or equip male leaders to reproduce male champions

Since 83 percent of the respondents ($n = 24$) were exposed to visible female leadership early in their childhood or youth (Q11), it seems many believed that male champions are the byproducts of sound egalitarian teaching at an early age. The respondents also valued intentional advocacy, modeling, and visibility as contributing factors for reproducing male champions. Several respondents mentioned the importance of discovering or onboarding competent female leaders, not any women; they used adjectives such as "qualified," "outstanding," "gifted," and "proven" to describe the right kind of female leaders.

Several respondents mentioned the importance of having honest and authentic conversations about the issues related to female leadership. One respondent (R13) noted, "Normalize the conversation and allow for discussion on the subject." Another respondent (R16) agreed and said, "Have women leaders in our movement have candid conversations about the challenges they face and maybe some of the inadvertent ways we are not supporting their call to ministry. We may be discouraging the call of God among the ones He is raising up in our leadership." Male leaders (R23 and R26) argued that the conversations about women in ministerial leadership must be "a more discussed topic" and to keep them "front and center." Engaging in such discussions would increase awareness of female ministers' challenges or invisible barriers and inspire male allies to advocate for them when necessary.

Three respondents highlighted the importance of men reproducing male champions. Respondents (R19 and R21) argued that men's intentional and organic approaches were most effective. In addition, respondent (R20) believed equipping and encouraging majority-male district/network leaders is essential to reproducing male allies or advocates. Consequently, when men train and mentor aspiring male champions, fewer women may experience gender disparity, defend their ministerial calling, or view fellow male ministers as enemies, threats, or stumbling blocks in their ministerial journey.

Question 47 asked what male ministers must know to train, empower, affirm/advocate for, and mentor female ministers called to higher leadership. Respondent (R22) opted out. The common themes from their responses included the following:

1. Male ministers must know that God's Word and heart affirm the gender-inclusive call to and Spirit-empowerment for ministry.

2. Male ministers must acknowledge the gender biases against female ministers and male privileges within the leadership culture.

3. Male ministers must recognize their divine call and responsibility to listen, learn, and lead with their advocating voice to facilitate change.

4. Male ministers must value women ministers not based on their gender but their proven results, skills, abilities, gifts, and character.

5. Male ministers must understand that there are both needs and opportunities for championing women called to ministry.

Respondent (R06) shared unique insight into investing in the "right women" to be more efficient and productive with the time spent since many high-level leaders or mentors have busy schedules. He listed five qualities of such women: (1) history of faithfulness, (2) driven by a

calling, not a cause, (3) successful followership, (4) proven results, and (5) divine gifts. The contrast between a calling and a cause demonstrated two types of motivation, with the first stemming from the obedience to God and the latter from the passion for social justice or political correctness.

Respondents (R03, R16, R18, and R21) emphasized the responsibility of higher leadership, especially those leading in the local churches, to normalize egalitarian ministry through intentional affirmation and advancement of called women at all levels of visible leadership. Respondent (R21) added that pastors have the divine obligations to write, teach, and preach from the egalitarian perspective because their words and actions impact their church culture and operation.

Question 48 asked what female ministers must understand about their male colleges as they lead alongside them. Respondents (R04 and R22) opted out. Five themes surfaced from the responses:

1. Female ministers must acknowledge that change is a process.
2. Female ministers must accept that some men will never change, but more men are supportive than they realize.
3. Female ministers must assume the best in male colleagues and teach them what they do not know.
4. Female ministers can initiate conversations with men and call them out with grace when necessary; the activist approach does more harm than good.
5. Female ministers must understand men are more susceptible to visual stimulation.

Respondents (R01 and R08) noted that change is difficult and takes time. Respondent (R08) also mentioned that undoing the "years of bad teaching" takes time and education. Male

leaders (R23 and R26) reported that most well-intended men do not know how to champion

women and need training. Also, one respondent (R09) claimed, "For the most part, we are

collectively idiots with little training in appropriate sharing of true leadership with women—even

when our intentions are good." Words such as "shy," "uncertain," "clueless," and "unintentional"

described the aspiring male champions who lacked knowledge of how to support female

ministers. The overall responses indicated that unlearning bad theology and practices is equally

important as learning new information on gender-inclusive ministerial leadership.

The respondents also warned against an activist approach when interacting with male

colleagues in ministry. Respondent (R06) said, "I am turned off by any leader (male or female)

who has something to prove or a motivation driven by activism … I am turned off by leaders

(male or female) who desire influence that is not authenticated by effectiveness, results and team

skills." Another respondent (R17) noted, "[Men] are intimidated by ag[g]ressive women." Still

another (R20) shared that "[Men] also do not do well when they feel pushed or when they feel

they are being used to advance an agenda." Such statements indicated that male colleagues

respond less positively to the aggressive feminist voice or movement, which could be perceived

as argumentative, divisive, or inflammatory. However, they may be more prone to cooperate or

collaborate when female ministers initiate conversations or meetings in a peaceful, respectful,

and graceful way. A non-threatening or non-accusatory approach, from either side, may unarm

both parties and create a safe, respectful space for active listening, increasing empathy, and

mutually edifying conversations and learning in gender-inclusive ministries.

Respondent (R06) sent a follow-up email after submitting the survey to provide

additional insight for female ministers. Following is an excerpt from his email:

> What can female leaders do? As of today, the Assemblies of God USA has 37,713
> ministers. 27 percent or 10,281 of our credentialed ministers are female. Of our 10,281

female ministers, 2,214 are certified, 4,016 are licensed and 4,051 are ordained. That means that only 4,000 women nationally are ordained and thus qualified to be in an elected position or formal leadership pipeline. Another way to say it is that 60 percent of female ministers have not chosen to seek a credential that would give them upward mobility or influence as a member of a formal leadership community. If just the number of licensed female ministers upgraded their potential we would double the pool of ordained females. In essence, the greatest obstacle for immediate female advancement right now seems to be internal (a lack of credential advancement) more than external (advocacy or opportunity).[3]

In other words, this respondent argued that the lack of ordained women in the AG is the greatest challenge for female ministers for advancing in leadership. Such an observation is an excellent example of a sticky floor, referring to the barriers women impose on themselves in their leadership advancement.[4] It shows that male allyship has limited power or influence to make tangible changes when women fail to prepare themselves for higher leadership.

Question 49 asked, "How do you practice ethical cross-gender mentorship while honoring each other's integrity, purity, credibility, and reputation?" This question identified common practical pathways to championing women called to ministry based on the respondents' lived experiences or practices. Respondents (R08 and R22) opted out.

Four notable themes from the responses included the following:

1. Meet in visible places or in small groups to remove secrecy.

2. Communicate with a spouse or co-workers about meetings with the opposite gender.

3. Use wisdom and common sense to keep ethical boundaries.

4. Treat women with the same respect and honor as God's image-bearers.

Meeting in visible places such as in public, in an office with a window, or in small groups reflected the intentional championship of male allies or advocates who understood the tension

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[3] Gene Roncone, email message to the researcher, December 11, 2021.

[4] Kadi Cole, *Developing Female Leaders: Navigate the Minefields and Release the Potential of Women in Your Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2019), 12-13.

between the BGR and the professional needs of female ministers. Four respondents confirmed

practicing the BGR (R03, R07, R28, and R29). But as evidenced by their responses to other

questions, they still found other means to champion women without violating their conviction on

cross-gender mentorship.

Respondents (R03, R28, and R29) were the only ones who addressed men's vulnerability

to visual stimulation (Q48). Additionally, respondent (R07) demonstrated the least championing

tendency on training and mentoring questions in which he indicated having no female mentees

currently (Q27), never initiating training or mentoring female mentees (Q30), and never inviting

female mentees to casual or informal meetings (Q31). Men who practiced the BGR demonstrated

more awareness of men's sexual nature, but that did not prevent them from supporting female

ministers in other tangible ways. Instead, they championed women through verbal affirmation,

recommending them for visible ministry opportunities, meeting in small groups, or calling out

misogynistic comments. Therefore, such observation may suggest that not all men who practice

the BGR are hostile against women in ministerial leadership.

Communicating with a spouse was another popular recommendation to honor the

integrity, purity, credibility, and reputation in cross-gender mentorship. Several respondents felt

the importance of informing their wives before or after meeting with other women as part of their

regular ministerial practices. Respondent (R19) recommended practicing the same integrity and

transparency by notifying the spouse of a female mentee as he believed "[s]ecrets breed

insecurity." Also, respondent (R20) noted that he would only engage in one-on-one meetings,

lunches, or other social gatherings with his wife's consent. His response indicated that the health

of his marriage always takes precedence over the needs of mentees. Such feedback provided a

helpful perspective for female ministers. Sometimes, male allies or advocates may refuse to

engage in cross-gender mentorship to honor their wives, not because they are uncomfortable or disagree with championing women in ministry. In addition, even men who do not engage in private engagements for different reasons are open to meeting in small groups. The good news is that all respondents believed that cross-gender mentorship is possible, whether in private or small group settings (Q33).

Other responses included recognizing individual's innate value and treating each other with the same honor, respect, and integrity. Respondent (R05) stated, "Treat [women] like a human being." Another respondent (R10) argued, "Every[one] is given the same respect regardless of gender." Male leader (R27) added, "Honor and respect individuality." Overall, the respondents passed John Ortberg's three tests addressed in the literature review, which are foundational for creating a healthy gender-inclusive team: (1) the sibling test, (2) the screen test, and (3) the secret test.[5] These hypothetical assessments serve as the ultimate test of character in private cross-gender interactions.

Question 50 asked for any additional thoughts or input regarding male allyship for female ministers. Sixteen respondents (55 percent) contributed. The most common theme from their responses was keeping the balance between orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Respondent (R01) argued, "There exists a need to push back misogynistic thinking and behaviors as inappropriate, and to continue to teach and remind younger male ministers that Reformed Theology and complementarian positions are not in alignment with our stated doctrinal beliefs." Furthermore, respondent (R23) observed that "[the AG] want to try to fit in with other evangelicals too much … we need better egalitarian theologians." Hence, male ministers recognized the dichotomy

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[5] Ibid., 111.

between the AG's egalitarian theology and practices and felt the urgency to address the deviance with authenticity and correct it in humility.

Two respondents shared unique final thoughts. Respondent (R20) expressed frustration about losing quality female leaders. He commented, "I don't have the answer to this, but we have lost two wonderful female pastors from our team in the last few months because of spousal job relocations out of town. We are about to lose another. I find it frustrating trying to keep strong female pastors for the long term given family issues. I have seen more longevity with single females." His input revealed an ongoing issue that women ministers face due to the marriage dynamics or changes throughout their womanhood. While this issue was not the focus of the research, it raised an important question of how male allies or advocates could create a pathway for married women to continue their call to ministry.

In addition, respondent (R03) viewed gender differences as strengths, not weaknesses or threats. He noted, "God did make men and women differently. That's why we have female and male bathrooms, female and male clothing. In the same way, it is good that we are different because we can learn from each other." His perspective was congruent with the championing mindset that Barbara Annis and John Gray observed in healthy organizations that successfully advanced both men and women in unison.[6]

Respondent (R11) summed up the common characteristic of all twenty-nine respondents: "Stay intentional." Regardless of their ages, leadership roles, ministry contexts, or personal boundaries, they all championed female ministers deliberately and strategically. Intentionality is key.

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[6] Barbara Annis and John Gray, *Work with Me: How Gender Intelligence Can Help You Succeed* (London: Piatkus, 2016), 24.

Data Analysis Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the essential roles of male allies or advocates by observing the common championing practices of current AG male ministers from various backgrounds. The online qualitative survey via Google Forms contained fifty anonymous questions divided into six categories: the participant's demographics, personal history, ministry/organizational context, training and mentoring perception and practices, empowering and advocating perception and practices, and open-ended questions for additional insight on male allyship and gender-inclusive leadership in ministry. The questions were formulated based on the guiding research question: How can male leaders successfully champion female ministers in the AG U.S.A.? The survey was sent to forty-seven AG male ministers on December 10, 2021, followed by a reminder notification on January 19. The survey was closed on January 23.

Twenty-nine out of forty-seven male ministers (61.7 percent) responded. The results of the first category on the participants' demographics identified the general profile of a male champion. An ordained local church pastor or district/network leader in the age groups 50s and 60s with exposure to female leadership in childhood, marriage, and family is the most likely candidate for a male champion for female ministers. A male leader with a daughter will likely demonstrate a greater allyship tendency.

The outcomes of the second category on personal history indicated that early exposure to visible female leadership during childhood or youth directly influences future male allyship that normalizes female leadership at all levels of ministry. Many male allies or advocates who grew up watching their mothers serve in leadership are likely to hire and advance women in visible leadership positions with decision-making power. Most male champions held the egalitarian

view of ministerial leadership throughout their lives, influenced by the female examples in their

upbringing, family, and theological training.

The third category provided great insight into the gender-inclusive ministerial context.

An organization is gender-inclusive when qualified women represent more than a third of

leadership, receive compatible paychecks as their male counterparts, have regular visibility,

exercise decision-making authority, and fulfill roles that match their titles. A gender-inclusive

AG organization practices egalitarianism both in theology and practice. The results showed the

gap between hiring women and advancing them into higher leadership. Eighty-three percent of

the respondents reported that their organizations intentionally hire women, but only 69 percent

said their organizations promote qualified women to higher positions.

The fourth and fifth categories of the survey observed the respondents' championing

practices through training, empowering, affirming/advocating, and mentoring women. Their

responses revealed the best practices of cross-gender mentorship that modified the BGR to fit the

growing professional needs of female ministers. Male allies or advocates preferred monthly

meetings in small groups. They often initiated training or mentoring opportunities and leveraged

their positional authority to affirm women in ministry publicly, make systemic or organizational

changes for gender-inclusive leadership, and advance women to visible ministry platforms.

A few respondents were hesitant to meet with female ministers at informal gatherings or

one-on-one meetings. However, all participants believed in championing women called to

ministry by using gender-inclusive language, calling out misogynistic comments, and adjusting

their preferences to meet the professional needs of their female mentees. Their positive outlook

on the AG's gender-inclusive practices conflicted with the opinions of female leaders discovered

in another study conducted by the researcher. Male ministers believed that all ministers were

equally empowered and advocated for their leadership development, advancement, and ministry opportunities. Women thought these were the areas for growth.

The final category containing five open-ended questions provided great insight into successful male allyship and gender-inclusive leadership in ministry. Some of the key points from the responses included the following: teaching egalitarian theology at an early age, modeling egalitarian leadership at all levels (i.e., local church, district/network, and national levels), and addressing the challenges or barriers in authenticity, grace, love, and respect. The participants embraced their unique calling to champion female ministers and the responsibility to train other men and hold them accountable.

In addition, their responses showed that not all men in the AG will embrace women ministers or modify the BGR to meet their growing professional needs. However, such men are few compared to many others who are willing to champion women by intentionally creating pathways for their leadership development. The most notable characteristic of male champions was their intentionality to embody egalitarian theology within the healthy boundaries that honor God, their families, and fellow ministers. Male ministers who understand God's Word and heart are quick to empower women as co-laborers in Christ, called to the same mission of Matthew 28:19.

Since the survey participants were already active male allies or advocates with proven track records of championing women in various contexts, they demonstrated varying degrees of championing practices through training, mentoring, empowering, and affirming female ministers. Although all respondents adhered to egalitarianism, each person had their own approach to gender-inclusive ministry and cross-gender mentorship or fellowship according to their personal conviction.

The survey gathered sufficient information from twenty-nine male ministers to identify the proven championing practices that other AG male ministers can implement directly in their ministerial contexts. The researcher anticipated more responses since two groups of male ministers received the survey link—one group of twenty-two male ministers from the preliminary study and the second group of twenty-five district leaders. Even though this study reached a response rate of 62 percent (higher than 56 percent from the previous research), a larger sample could have yielded more comprehensive results.

Overall, the project concluded successfully because of helpful responses from the participants who embodied egalitarianism and practiced gender-inclusive ministries. Their years of championing practices yielded reliable perspectives to recontextualize the BGR and foster a gender-inclusive leadership culture at the local church, district/network, and national levels. In addition, their empowering examples offered hope and healing to female ministers who may suffer in silence and question their calling due to feeling rejected, invisible, or excluded in their ministerial journey.

Synthesis within Ministry Context

The primary goal of this project was to examine the championing practices of active male allies or advocates and offer tangible action steps for aspiring male champions to apply in their immediate ministry contexts to remove barriers for female ministers.

During this project, several initiatives took place to address the importance of male allyship and gender-inclusive leadership in ministry:

First, Gene Roncone from Rocky Mountain Ministry Network invited the researcher to participate in collaborative efforts to develop cross-gender leadership practices as a resource, not

bylaws or policy, to local ministers. This team of thirty-one individuals of both genders included various scholar-practitioners such as theologians, educators, and professional counselors. As a result, *BGR 2.0: Contextualizing the Billy Graham Rule for Cross-gender Ministry Teams*[7] was published in February 2022 with unanimous support from the Network's Executive Presbytery. This six-page document includes a brief historical background of the BGR, the examples of Jesus Christ embodying egalitarianism in his life and ministry, situational applications, and sample guided questions to help rethink the BGR after more than seven decades since its creation. This resource will help start healthy conversations among ministers, staff, and boards as they build God's Kingdom together "without marginalizing female ministry leaders, overcomplicating administration, neglecting cross-gender mentoring, and diminishing accountability."[8]

Second, the researcher recorded a national podcast interview on *Championing Women Practically* with two superintendents: Roncone—who was mentioned above—and Rich Guerra from the SoCal Ministry Network. Guerra recently joined the twenty-one-member AG national Executive Presbytery. Each man answered two questions to address successful male allyship for female ministers (see Appendix D for the list of questions). The Network of Women Ministers (NWM) podcast was recorded on January 23, 2022 and aired via various social media platforms on March 22, 2022.

Third, a four-part video series was created to resource aspiring male champions based on the research findings. These videos addressed the following topics: (1) the theology of leadership and the biblical examples of male allies or advocates, (2) key lessons from the literature review,

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[7] See Appendix C. Shared with permission. http://www.agspe.org/RMMN_BGR-2.0.pdf

[8] Ibid., 1.

(3) a practical guide to championing women in ministry based on the survey outcomes, and (4) an interview with the selected male ministers who participated in the survey. The first three videos were recorded at the AG national office studio and the last video was recorded via StreamYard. All four videos were uploaded on the NWM website.[9]

Additionally, indirect benefits of this research and applications may include a growing number of male champions in the AG based on sound theological-biblical conviction, positive peer pressure, increasing visibility of female ministers at all levels of leadership, and the restored image of male ministers as supportive allies or advocates rather than threats or barriers to personal growth and leadership advancement in ministry. The researcher hopes that this study will redeem the relationships between male and female ministers through the lens of co-image-bearers and co-laborers in Christ and by recontextualizing the BGR that upholds the integrity of all ministers while breaking down the barriers for women called to ministerial leadership.

Summary

The analysis of the qualitative survey of twenty-nine ordained ministers identified the common characteristics of male allies or advocates and their proven championing practices to advance women in ministerial leadership. Based on the survey outcomes, an ordained local church pastor or district/network leader in the age groups 50s and 60s, with exposure to female leadership in childhood, marriage, and family, is the most likely candidate for a male champion for female ministers. Their championing practices stemmed from egalitarian theological education, early exposure to female leadership, gender intelligence, and intentionality. The primary goal of this project was successfully met through the survey analysis, which was to offer tangible action

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[9] www.womenministers.ag.org/bettertogether. See Appendix E for scripts and a link to the videos.

steps for aspiring male champions to implement in their contexts to remove gender barriers for female ministers in their leadership development.

This study revealed some common championing practices based on the respondents' lived experiences through various training, mentoring, empowering, and advocating opportunities. They served in organizations in which 90 percent of women were credentialed, 97 percent had the voting rights and decision-making authority, 97 percent served in clears roles that matched their titles, 97 percent received the compatible pay as their counterparts, and 100 percent had regular visibility. However, there was a gap between the perceived gender-inclusiveness and actuality. Also, another gap existed between hiring women and promoting them to higher leadership. Intentional training, mentoring, advocating/affirming, and empowering practices could narrow these gaps.

For ongoing training or mentoring, male ministers preferred monthly meetings in small groups. While some practiced the BGR to varying degrees according to their convictions or contexts, the respondents demonstrated strong allyship by leveraging their positional authority to affirm or empower women called to ministerial leadership. They regularly acknowledged and normalized visible female leadership by making systemic or organizational changes, using gender-inclusive language, modeling cross-gender mentoring, and opening doors for women to fellowship, worship, and lead with their male colleagues.

The respondents were acutely aware of their male privilege and used it to further God's Kingdom. They perceived themselves as part of the solution to removing barriers and empowering or advancing qualified women to the next leadership level. Also, they willingly embraced the responsibility to call out any misogynist comments as allies or advocates for female ministers. None were accidental champions. Intentionality was key to their success.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROJECT CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This project conducted a fifty-question qualitative survey to identify the common characteristics and championing practices of twenty-nine AG male ministers who actively support female ministers at the local, district/network, or national level. Survey outcomes provided helpful insights that answered the guiding research question: How can male leaders successfully champion female ministers in the Assemblies of God U.S.A.? As a result, the project offered tangible action steps that aspiring male champions can implement in their immediate contexts to remove gender barriers for female ministers. The research findings culminated in the creation of a new podcast series called *Better Together* for the Network of Women Ministers to foster ongoing conversations between male and female ministers on gender-inclusive ministerial leadership and partnership to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:19).

Lessons Learned

As the result of this project, the researcher discovered the following lessons:

First, God uniquely equipped male ministers to narrow the gap between the stance and practice of the AG on women in ministry. Since not all credentialed men are in the position of authority or influence to make tangible changes, many female ministers feel discouraged or frustrated when facing gender biases in the male-dominated leadership culture. The project concluded that ordained local church pastors or district/network leaders in the age groups of

fifties and sixties, who hold graduate or post-graduate degrees, with exposure to female

leadership in childhood, marriage, and family, are the most likely candidates for male allies or

advocates who can help female ministers thrive in their ministerial journey. It is unrealistic to

expect all AG male ministers to support women in ministry because the application of egalitarian

theology looks different in every culture or context. As one of the respondents noted, "Change is

a process." Female ministers do not need all men to support them. A few good men are all it

takes to create a ripple effect, which is happening in the AG today.

Second, early exposure to egalitarian theology and practices proves critical in forming a

championing mindset for gender-inclusive leadership and ministry. The survey results

demonstrated a direct relationship between male allyship and the exposure to female leadership

during formative years. Also, men who are married to wives leading outside the home are more

likely to support and normalize gender-inclusive leadership and cross-gender interactions in

ministry. Since early exposure to healthy visible female leaders remains vital for developing

future male champions, local pastors have an important role in discovering, developing, and

deploying women at all levels of church ministry.

Third, not all male ministers who practice the (revised) BGR are against gender-inclusive

ministerial leadership or cross-gender mentorship. The original BGR, created more than seven

decades ago, favored male-centric ministerial leadership and excluded women from leading

alongside their male colleagues. However, this project's survey outcomes showed that some

male ministers who adhered to the BGR recontextualized it to meet the growing needs of female

ministers in their ministerial leadership journey. Survey participants indicated that monthly small

group meetings serve as the most optimal setting to foster healthy, ongoing cross-gender

mentoring. The degrees to which ministers follow the BGR may vary based on individual

conviction, culture, upbringing, age, respect for a spouse's wish, awareness of personal sexual temptation, etc. Therefore, it was premature to assume that all ministers who practice the BGR are against women in ministry or that they avoid interacting with the opposite gender at all costs. Those who understand God's heart and mission will find ways to champion fellow ministers for His Kingdom and glory.

Fourth, male allies or advocates recognized their male-privilege and leveraged their positional authority to make tangible changes. The respondents embraced their unique responsibility to champion women in ministry because they realized that most decision-making tables are occupied by men. Despite the tension caused by the #MeToo and #ChurchToo movements, they continued to train, mentor, affirm, and empower women called to ministry. Also, these men did not hesitate to offer honest feedback or constructive criticism from their female mentees, call out any misogynist comments, or make organizational changes because they embraced such responsibilities as part of their unique calling.

Fifth, women also have a responsibility to narrow the gap between egalitarian theology and practices. Even though men occupy most leadership positions in the AG, they are not solely responsible for women's advancement in ministerial leadership. Women can educate themselves for ministry preparation, apply for ministerial credentials (or pursue ordination to be eligible for decision-making positions), initiate meetings with male colleagues, mentor men in various age groups, or coach male ministers who desire to champion women for the cause of Christ and the future of the Church. Exercising the benefit of the doubt, forgiveness, and grace will create safe space for mutual growth and support.

Sixth, gender intelligence helps cultivate a collaborative leadership culture without crossing ethnical boundaries or fearing gender differences. The fact that only 15 percent of the

respondents "always" or "often" engage female mentees in informal settings (e.g., lunch meetings) indicated that even some active male allies or advocates struggle with a perception of compromising sexual integrity. Although God's call to ministry is not based on one's gender, all men and women are gendered beings, and some struggle with sexual temptations more than others. Gender intelligence allows ministers to recognize such differences, respect self-imposed boundaries, and relate to one another through their common calling, responsibility, and identity in Christ.

Seventh, intentionality remains key to transforming the leadership culture. This project's survey participants were countercultural, pioneering leaders who modeled gender-inclusive leadership against their cultural norm. Seventy-seven percent of them were fifty years old or older, which means their championing mindset and allying practices were unusual for their generations. Yet, these male ministers were intentionally investing in women called to ministry because they knew God, His Word, and the *missio Dei*. Transforming a leadership culture takes intentional leaders, like the respondents, who willingly unlearn non-inclusive practices and learn new skills in humility and unity for common goals.

Consideration for the Future

Throughout the project, the researcher connected with an increasing number of new male ministers who actively champion female ministers in various contexts. As the visibility of female ministers continues to increase in various platforms in AG churches, districts/networks, and the national office, it remains important to recognize that an army of male champions exists who are making a difference, often behind the scenes. Since the common narrative is sometimes hostile toward male ministers while the number of female ministers continues to increase each year,

there is a growing need to cultivate a spirit of unity, celebration, and collaboration among AG ministers. With district/network leaders and local pastors in mind, the following recommendations can continue to foster ongoing conversations to normalize gender-inclusive ministry and cross-gender mentoring at all levels of leadership:

1. Equip district leaders with resources to train new and current local church pastors to embody egalitarian theology and use gender-inclusive language in accordance with the official position of the AG on women in ministry. Based on the lived experiences of female ministers, not all AG ministers adhere to egalitarianism. Such a dichotomy between theology and praxis will continue to disrupt God's ideals by diluting the Pentecostal conviction of the Holy Spirit's anointing and empowerment on all humanity. As a result, the Church will lose called and competent women as they leave ministry discouraged and find alternatives where they feel welcome or that they belong.

2. Educate or re-educate ministers who do not fully comprehend or adhere to egalitarian theology at all levels of ministerial leadership. The goal is leveling the leadership ground according to the AG belief and bylaws so that all feel welcomed, supported, validated, and protected in their ministerial journey. Without such intentional education, female ministers will continue to hear misogynist comments, experience gender-biased barriers, and suffer in silence in ministry. As long as the AG continues to grant ministerial credentials to women, female ministers' experiences among their peers must match its egalitarian belief. Otherwise, women will feel betrayed by the AG because of the bait-and-switch experiences.

3. Develop monthly mentoring cohorts between male (i.e., district/network leaders or local pastors) and female ministers to normalize egalitarian ministry practices, cultivate gender-inclusive ministerial leadership development, and provide ongoing spiritual and practical support. This can be initiated at the district/network level by engaging the presbyters whose primary responsibility is ministering to ministers. During their terms, they can build personal relationships with the same mentees (with an option to change cohorts as needed), which will help local pastors or ministers feel more connected and invested to their districts/networks. Such intentional fellowship and discipleship will help identify upcoming leaders who can be the next featured speakers, presbyters, credentialing committee members, or district/network leaders.

4. Establish a support group for the increasing number of pastors' husbands at the local, district/network, and national levels. These men represent a new affinity group of active male allies or advocates for their credentialed wives. Without intentionally honoring their support and investing in their journey as ministers' spouses, they will feel marginalized and alone, just as pastors' wives often do. While there are many resources and events that affirm the important role of pastors' wives, there are none for pastors' husbands. These brave men are paving the way by normalizing gender-inclusive ministry alongside their wives. Invest in these men who champion female ministers.

5. As a result of positive collaborations with male ministers throughout this project, two pilot zoom meetings will be initiated (in July and November of 2022) to create intentional cross-gender mentoring opportunities between male district leaders and female NWM regional directors. If these trial meetings receive positive feedback, the

researcher will add this component as ongoing training for competent female ministers called to higher leadership. Since the Holy Spirit has been stirring up the hearts of male champions, the researcher will join His divine work by leveraging the national platform to continue to facilitate cross-gender ministry conversations, model gender-inclusive leadership, and validate the power of male allyship for female ministers.

The Church, especially credentialed ministers and ministry leaders, should no longer see gender-inclusive ministerial leadership as merely rhetoric as positive changes take place at local, district/network, and national levels. In the near future, the discussion on gender equity in leadership will cease to exist because side-by-side leadership among male and female co-laborers in Christ will become a norm, not an exception. Until then, there is a critical need for more male ministers in the position of influence to make tangible changes within the AG leadership culture. Below are the considerations for future research to develop aspiring male champions in ministry based on this project:

1. A study of biblical human sexuality and its implications on ministerial ethics. Examining the biological and psychological differences between men and women will help ministers view God's intentional design as strengths, not threats, to cross-gender mentoring or gender-inclusive ministry. This research may identify triggers for sexual temptations in a preventive manner and develop practical steps for the revised BGR.

2. A study of gender-inclusive ministerial leadership in a patriarchal culture. The gap between egalitarian rhetoric and its practices is wider among AG ethnic constituents due to their patriarchal social construct, culture, and/or customs. As more ethnic

Christians join AG churches and leadership across the United States, it remains

critical to address how the egalitarian stance on women in ministry is normalized

through sound teaching, preaching, and practices among these groups. Such a study

will help AG ethnic leaders and churches to reflect and grow in unity.

Limitations to the Project

The absent responses in some of the survey questions seemed to indicate hesitancy or discomfort

of the respondents. Between questions 28 and 38, one or two respondents chose not to respond to

some questions. While it is difficult to discern their motives, the questions about their

demographics or opinions received more responses than those that asked about their

championing practices (many of which posed scenarios that countered the BGR). The few who

skipped some questions may have done so because of feeling uneasy or unsure. Perhaps the

wording of those questions could have been less direct. For instance, question 28 asked, "When

was the last time you met with one of your female mentees to specifically train or mentor her in

ministerial leadership?" The better question would read, "What is your preferred frequency of

meeting with female mentees for training and mentoring?" Question 31 asked, "How often do

you invite your female mentees to lunch (a casual meeting outside the church) as you would with

their male counterparts where informal mentoring occurs?" Another way of asking the same

question would be, "How comfortable would you feel about mentoring women in less formal

settings?" Asking the questions related to the BGR less directly may have resulted in a higher

response rate.

While the primary purpose of the project was to observe the championing practices of

male ministers who are active advocates and allies for women in ministry, the researcher could

not be selective when the second group of respondents (i.e., district/network superintendents) received the survey link. Unlike the first group of respondents who were part of the preliminary survey on male champions referred by their female mentees in ministry, the second group of superintendents did not go through the same vetting process since they received the survey invitation through a male district superintendent. Although those who took the survey represented a group of men who participated in the collaborative project on the importance of recruiting and hiring female lead pastors, the effectiveness of their individual practices on championing women in ministry could not be confirmed by their female mentees.

Concluding Remarks

This project was an act of obedience to God who called me to preach the good news, make disciples of all nations, and be part of the solution that removes barriers for women called to ministerial leadership. It was a gritty journey marked by a growing understanding, love, and appreciation for fellow co-laborers in Christ, specifically male ministers who strive to champion women at every level of ministerial leadership by leveraging their positional influence. During this research, Dr. George O. Wood, former General Superintendent of the AG, and an exceptional male champion for female ministers, graduated into heaven on January 12, 2022. Although losing my mentor and advocate was devastating, I have discovered more male ministers in recent years whom God inspired to train, empower, affirm/advocate, and mentor women called to ministry. One day, the conversation about gender-inclusive leadership at all levels will prove irrelevant because it will be the norm. In the future, female leaders will need to leverage their positional influence to open doors for young men and women called to ministry. Until then, however, male allyship remains key to transforming the ministerial leadership

culture. While this research may not end the systemic barriers or challenges women face in ministry, I pray it inaugurates a new chapter filled with gracious, loving, forgiving, empathetic, and mutually edifying co-laborers in Christ. Until Jesus Christ returns, the Holy Spirit will continue to anoint and empower all servants of the Lord equally to serve as His witnesses to the ends of this earth (Acts 1:8). As God's image-bearers, men and women need one another in life and ministry. We are better together.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Demographics (10 questions)

1. What is your age?
    a. 30s
    b. 40s
    c. 50s
    d. 60s
    e. 70s+
2. What is your current <u>primary</u> ministerial position?
    a. National leader
    b. District leader
    c. Local church pastor
    d. Educator in Christian School
    e. Missionary
    f. Other (please specify)
3. What is your ministerial credential?
    a. Ordained
    b. Licensed
    c. Certified
    d. N/A
4. How long have you served in ministerial leadership roles? (Combine all years you've served at the decision-making tables in ministry)
    a. 10 years or less
    b. 11-20 years
    c. 21-30 years
    d. 31-40 years
    e. 40+ years
5. What is your educational background?
    a. Some college
    b. Undergraduate
    c. Graduate
    d. Post-graduate
    e. No former education
6. What is your marital status?
    a. Single
    b. Married
    c. Remarried
    d. Divorced
    e. Widowed
7. If you are married, is your spouse credentialed with the Assemblies of God?

        a. Yes

        b. No

        c. N/A

8. Does your wife serve in a leadership capacity, either in church or marketplace?

        a. Yes

        b. No

        c. N/A

9. Do you have a daughter?

        a. Yes

        b. No

10. Does your daughter serve in a leadership capacity, either in church or marketplace?

        a. Yes

        b. No

Personal History (5 questions)

11. When was your earliest exposure to "visible" female leadership in ministry?

        a. Early childhood

        b. Youth

        c. Young adulthood

        d. Adulthood

12. Growing up, did you see your mother serving in leadership?

        a. Yes

        b. No

13. Have you ever served under or reported to a female leader?

        a. Yes

        b. No

14. Have you ever hired a woman with decision-making authority for your organization?

        a. Yes

        b. No

15. How did your view on female ministerial leadership change over time?

        a. I've always believed called and qualified women can serve at all levels of ministerial leadership (egalitarian view).

        b. I've always believed women can serve in specific ministerial roles under male leadership (complementarian view).

        c. I used to believe women could <u>not</u> serve in ministerial leadership, but now I believe otherwise.

        d. I used to believe women could serve in ministerial leadership, but now I believe otherwise.

Ministry/Organizational Context (10 questions)

16. Do you currently lead or serve in a gender-inclusive organization?
    a. Yes
    b. No
17. Do women represent 30% or more of your leadership team?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. I don't know
18. Do women on your leadership team have ministerial credentials with the A/G?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. No, but in the process
    d. Some do, some do not
    e. I don't know
19. Do women on your leadership team have voting rights or decision-making authority?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Only some do
20. Do women on your leadership team have clear titles that accurately describe their roles?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Only some do
21. Do women on your leadership team have regular visibility?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Only some do
22. In what capacities do your female ministers/leaders serve in your organization?
    a. Paid full-time
    b. Paid part-time
    c. Volunteer
    d. Other (please specify)
23. Do women on your leadership team get the compatible pay as their counterparts?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. I don't know
24. How does your organization practice gender inclusiveness at all levels of leadership? (Select all that apply)
    a. My organization intentionally hires women.
    b. My organization strategically trains or mentors women for higher leadership.
    c. My organization organically invites women to meals, social activities, or other networking events.
    d. My organization fairly compensates women based on their education and experiences in comparison to their male counterparts.

e. My organization properly grants promotions to women who qualify.

25. In what state is your organization located?
     (Short answer)

Training and Mentoring (10 questions)

26. Do you currently have one or more trustworthy female <u>mentors</u>? (Includes peer-mentors)
     a. Yes
     b. No
27. Do you currently have one or more female <u>mentees</u> whom you invest in regularly?
     a. Yes
     b. No
28. When was the last time you met with one of your female mentees to specifically train or mentor her in ministerial leadership?
     a. Less than a week ago
     b. Less than a month ago
     c. Less than six months ago
     d. Less than a year ago
     e. More than a year ago
29. When was the last time you shared leadership resources with your female mentee that address her passion and goals (e.g., books, seminars, training events, etc.)?
     a. Less than a week ago
     b. Less than a month ago
     c. Less than six months ago
     d. Less than a year ago
     e. More than a year ago
30. How often do you *initiate* training or mentoring opportunities for female mentees?
     a. Always
     b. Often
     c. Sometimes
     d. Rarely
     e. Never
31. How often do you invite your female mentees to lunch (or a casual meeting outside church) as you would with their male counterparts where informal mentoring occurs?
     a. Always
     b. Often
     c. Sometimes
     d. Rarely
     e. Never
32. How often do you hesitate to offer honest feedback to your female mentees to avoid hurting their feelings or affecting their confidence?
     a. Always

   b. Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

33. When mentoring a female minister, which is the <u>least</u> preferred setting for you?

   a. One-on-one

   b. One-to-some (the inner circle)

   c. One-to-many (conference type)

   d. Depends on the needs of my mentees

34. How do your female mentees <u>typically</u> schedule a meeting with you? (Select the best answer)

   a. Through my assistant

   b. Through my wife

   c. Personal email

   d. Personal cell phone (text or call)

35. Do you feel the #MeToo or #ChurchToo movements influence your willingness to train and mentor women in ministry?

   a. Yes

   b. No

Empowering and Advocating (10 questions)

36. How often do you publicly affirm the leadership calling of female ministers and advocate for them?

   a. Always

   b. Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

37. How often do you invite your female mentees to social networking events outside work to intentionally introduce them to other influencers, mentors, or champions?

   a. Always

   b. Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

38. How often do you talk about your female mentees *in their absence* among other leaders for opening doors for them?

   a. Always

   b. Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

e. Never

39. How often do you recommend the names of female ministers as keynote speakers when planning a church, district, or national event to normalize their visibility?
    a. Always
    b. Often
    c. Sometimes
    d. Rarely
    e. Never

40. Have you personally empowered or advocated for female ministers by making a systemic or organizational change? (e.g., revising the bylaws, HR practices, or leadership pipeline)
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. I would, but never had an opportunity

41. **How much do you agree with the following statement?** Reforming the male-dominated leadership culture to become more gender-inclusive will empower women to lead throughout the different stages of womanhood (e.g., pregnancy).
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Somewhat agree
    c. Agree
    d. Somewhat disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

42. **How much do you agree with the following statement?** Men should call out fellow male colleagues for making misogynist or gender-biased statements about female ministers.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Somewhat agree
    c. Agree
    d. Somewhat disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

43. **How much do you agree with the following statement?** Male and female ministers in the Assemblies of God are equally empowered and advocated by their mentors for leadership development, advancement, and opportunities.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Somewhat agree
    c. Agree
    d. Somewhat disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

44. **How much do you agree with the following statement?** While women can champion women in leadership, men are better positioned to empower and advocate for women to the next level of leadership today.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Somewhat agree
    c. Agree

      d.   Somewhat disagree
      e.   Strongly disagree

45. **How much do you agree with the following statement?** Gender-inclusive language, both written and verbal, is essential to empowering, advocating, and normalizing female leadership**.**
      a.   Strongly agree
      b.   Somewhat agree
      c.   Agree
      d.   Somewhat disagree
      e.   Strongly disagree

*Open-ended Questions (5 questions)*

46. How can the AG reproduce and disciple more male champions like you?
47. What do male ministers must know to equally train, empower, affirm/advocate, and mentor female ministers called to higher leadership?
48. What do female ministers must understand about men as they lead side-by-side with their male colleagues?
49. How do you practice ethical cross-gender mentorship while honoring each other's integrity, purity, credibility, and reputation?
50. Any other final thoughts or wisdom on male allyship for female ministers?

APPENDIX B

SURVEY RESPONSES (CLOSED ON JANUARY 23, 2022)

I. DEMOGRAPHIC (10 QUESTIONS)

Q1. What is your age?
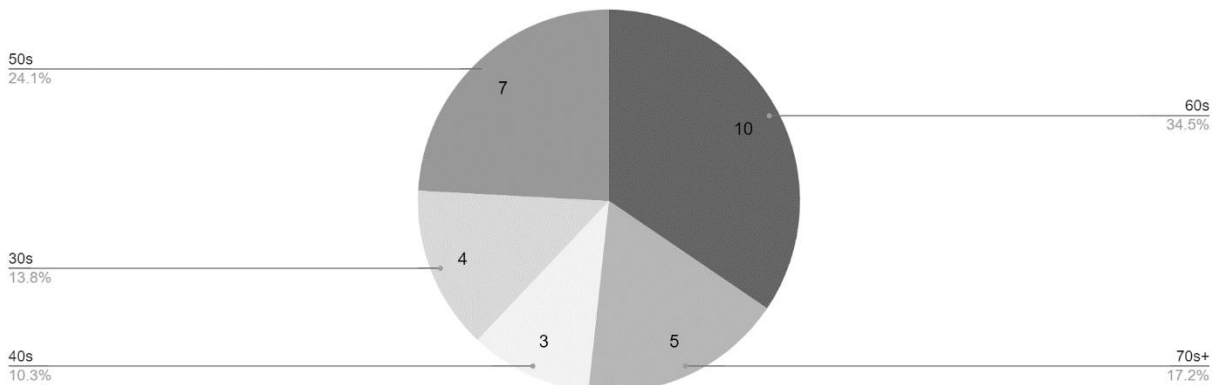
Q2. What is your current ministerial position?
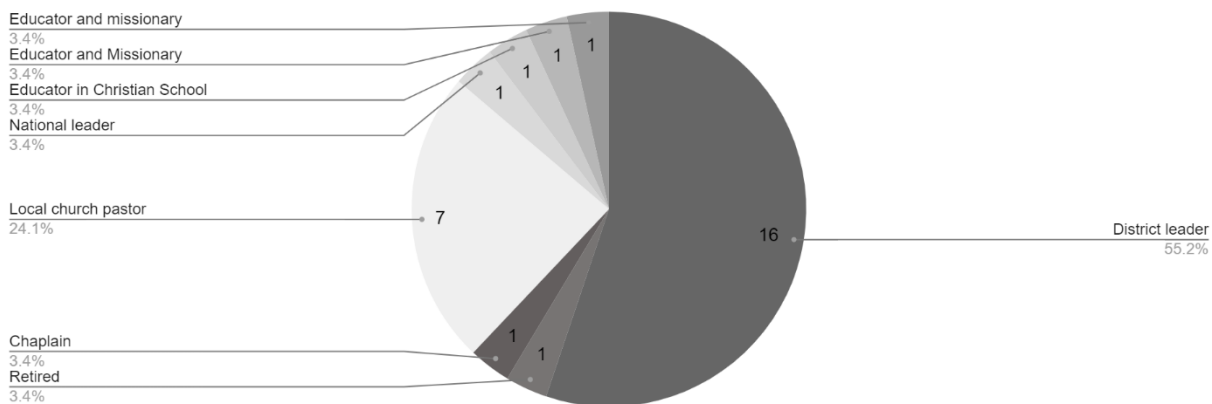
Q3. What is your ministerial credential?

Ordained (100.0%)
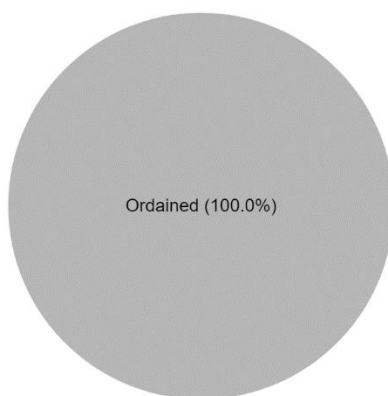
Q4. How long have you served in the ministerial leadership roles? (Combine all years you've served at the decision-making tables in ministry.)

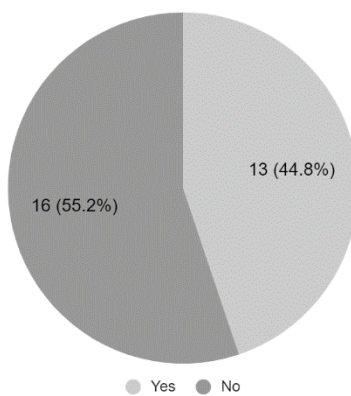11-20 years
13.8%

10 years or less
6.9%

21-30 years
24.1%

31-40 years
31.0%

40+ years
24.1%

Q5. What is your educational background?

Undergraduate
10.3%

Some college
13.8%

Post-graduate
44.8%

Graduate
31.0%

Q6. What is your marital status?

Married (100.0%)

Q7. If married, is your spouse credentialed with the Assemblies of God?

13 (44.8%)

16 (55.2%)

Yes   No

Q8. Does your wife serve in a leadership capacity, either in church or marketplace?

5 (17.2%)

24 (82.8%)

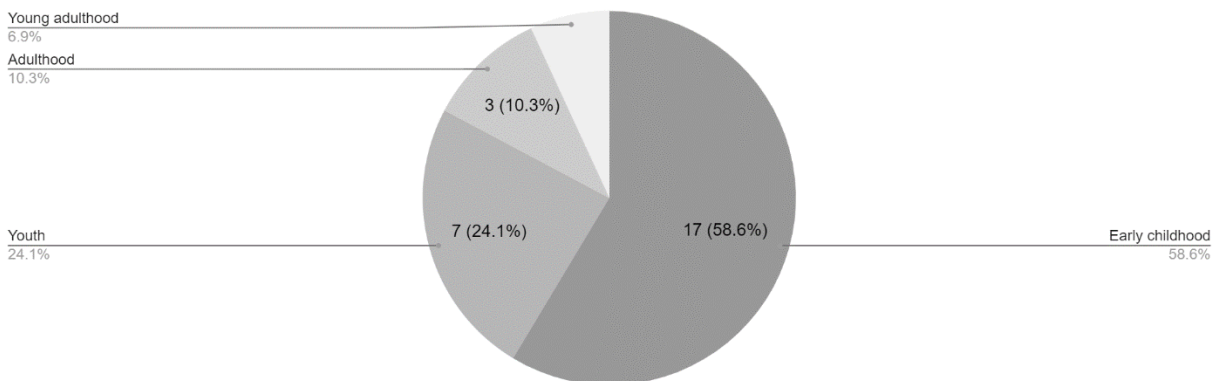Yes   No

Q9. Do you have a daughter?

4 (13.8%)

25 (86.2%)

● Yes ● No
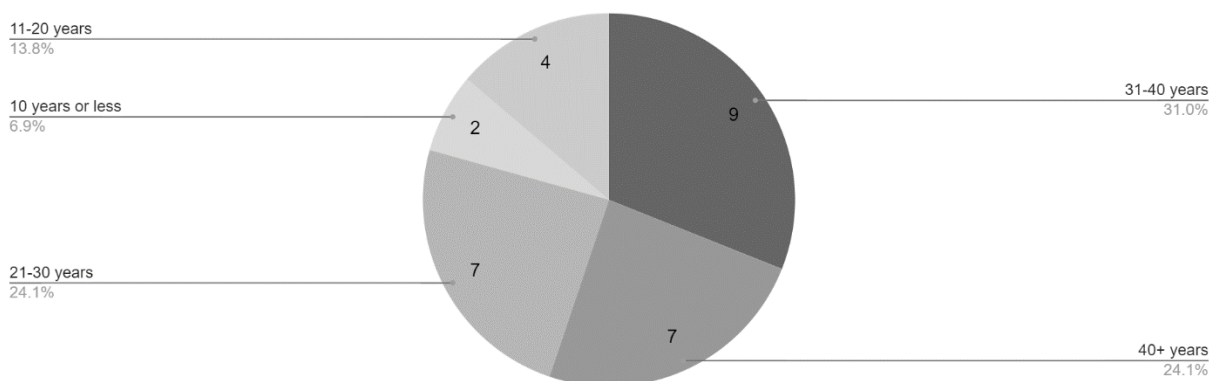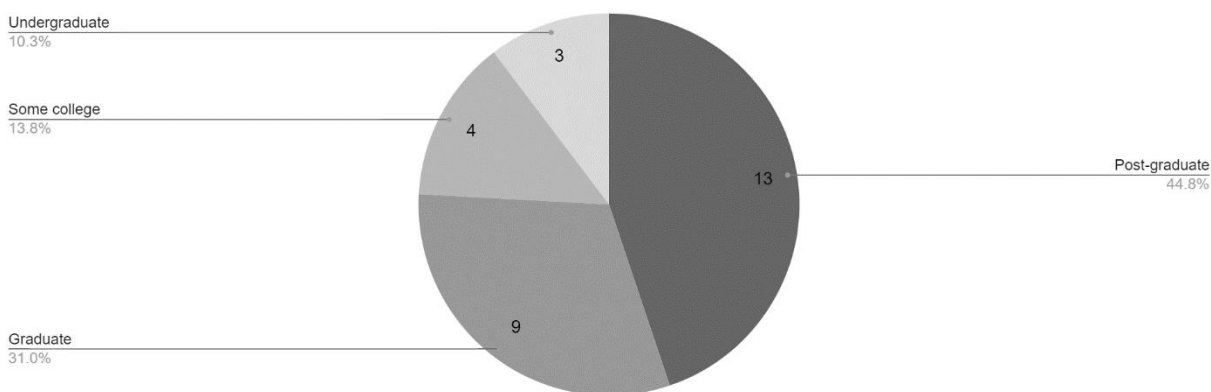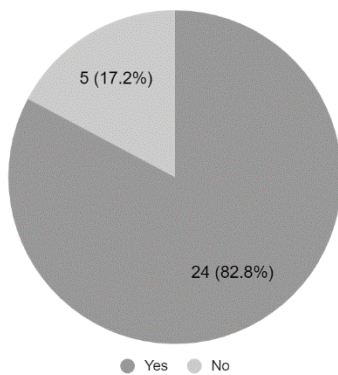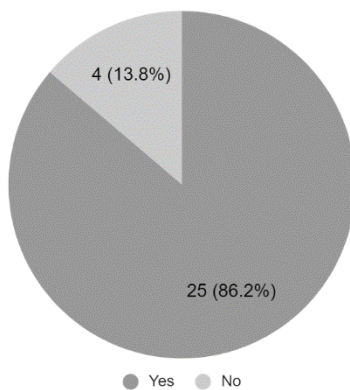
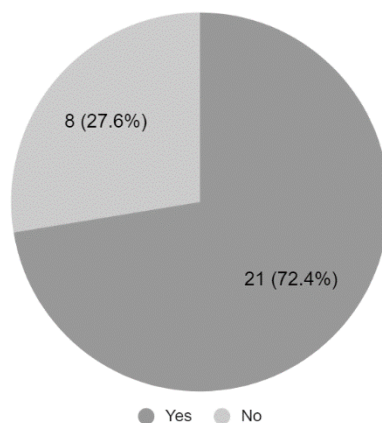**Q10. Does your daughter serve in a leadership capacity, either in church or marketplace? (Check "N/A" if she is a minor and has no work experience.)**

6 (20.7%)

20 (69.0%)

● Yes ● No ● N/A
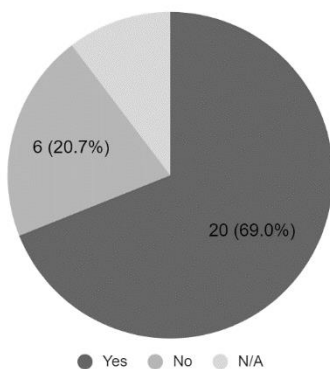
II.   PERSONAL HISTORY (5 QUESTIONS)

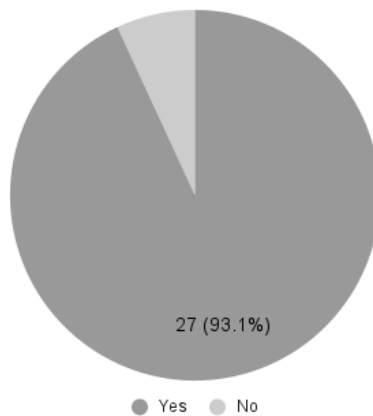Q11. When was your earliest exposure to "visible" female leadership in ministry?

Young adulthood
6.9%

Adulthood
10.3%

3 (10.3%)

Youth
24.1%

7 (24.1%)   17 (58.6%)   Early childhood
58.6%

Q12. Growing up, did you see your mother serving in leadership outside home?

8 (27.6%)

21 (72.4%)

● Yes ● No

Q13. Have you ever served under or reported to a female leader?

14 (48.3%)

15 (51.7%)

● Yes ● No
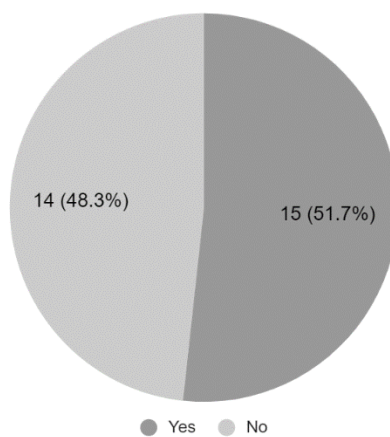
Q14. Have you hired a woman with a decision-making authority for your organization?

27 (93.1%)

● Yes ● No

Q15. How did your view on female ministerial leadership change over time?

- I've always believed called and qualified women can serve at all levels of ministerial leadership (egalitarian view).
- I used to believe women could not serve in ministerial leadership, but now I believe otherwise.

28 (96.6%)
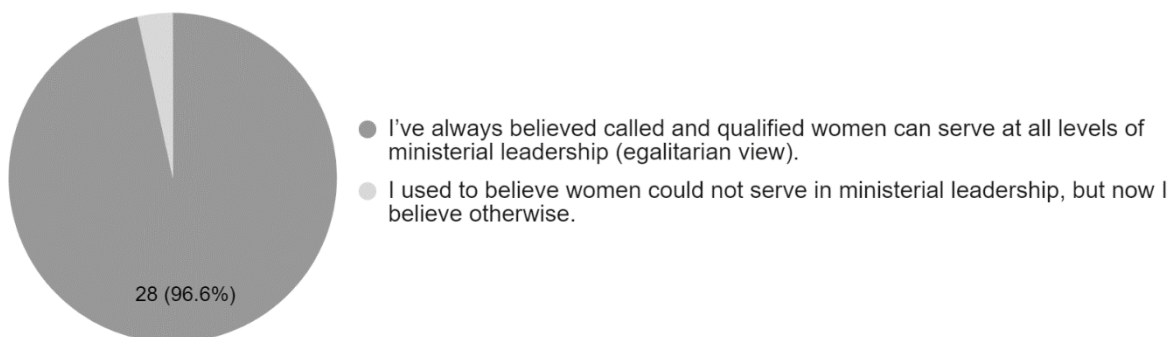
III.   MINISTRY CONTEXT (10 QUETIONS)

Q16. Do you currently lead or serve in a gender-inclusive organization?

28 (96.6%)

- Yes   ○ No

Q17. Do women represent a third or more of your leadership team?

11 (37.9%)

17 (58.6%)

- Yes   ○ I don't know   ● No

Q18. Do women on your leadership team have ministerial credentials with the AG?

26 (89.7%)

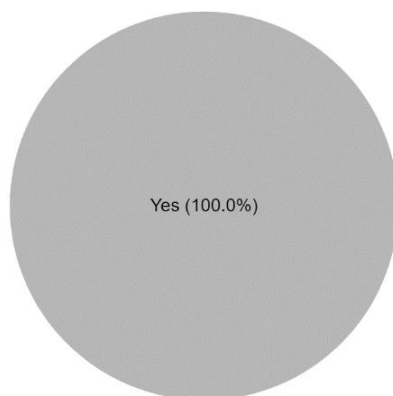● Yes   ● I don't know   ● Some do, some do not

Q19. Do women on your leadership team have voting rights or decision-making authority?

28 (96.6%)

● Yes   ● No

Q20. Do women on your leadership team have clear titles that accurately describe their roles?
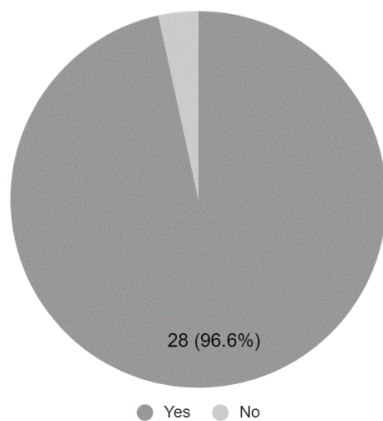
28 (96.6%)

● Yes   ● Some do

Q21. Do women on your leadership team have regular visibility?

Yes (100.0%)

Q22. In what capacities do your female ministers/leaders serve in your organization?

Paid full-time

Both paid (district office staff) and unpaid (presbytery and committees)

Paid part-time

Both full time paid and part time paid. Same as with the males on the team.

Stipend at the same amount that male counterparts are in that same role

Volunteer

Both Volunteer and Part-time

Executive/District Presbytery

0   5   10   15   20
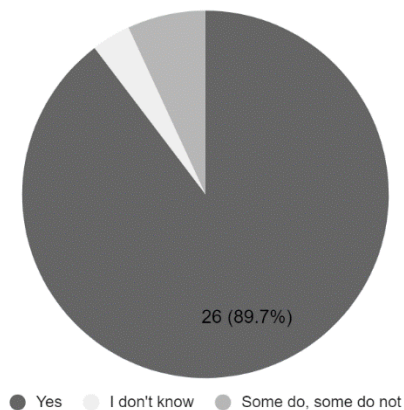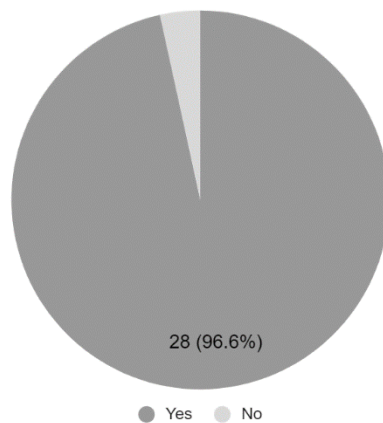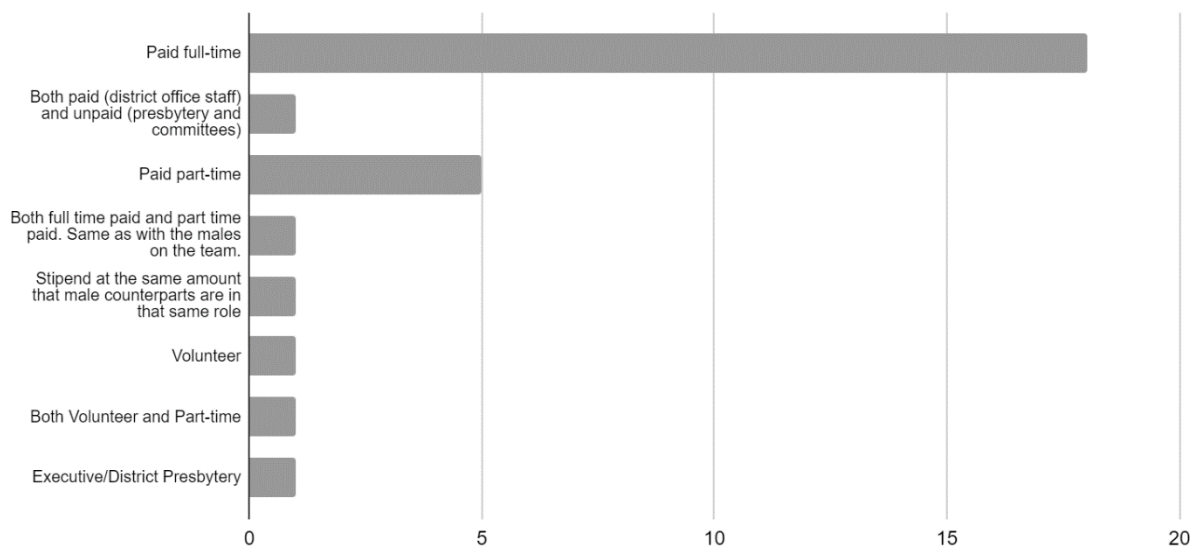
Q23. Do women on your leadership team get the compatible pay as their counterparts?

28 (96.6%)

Yes   No

Q24. How does your organization practice gender-inclusiveness at all levels of leadership? (Select all that apply.)
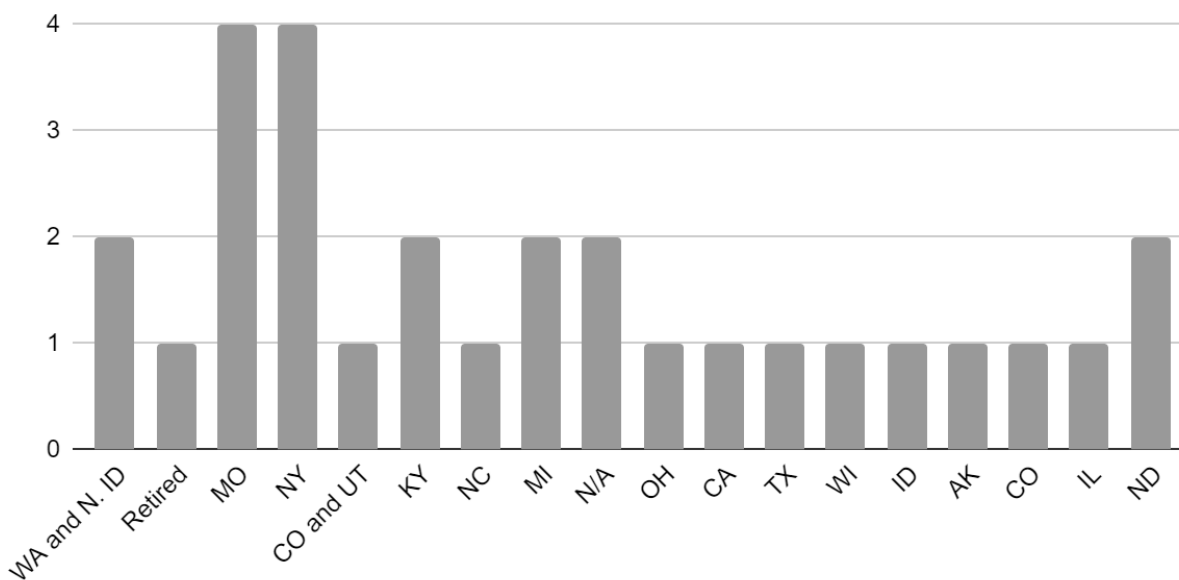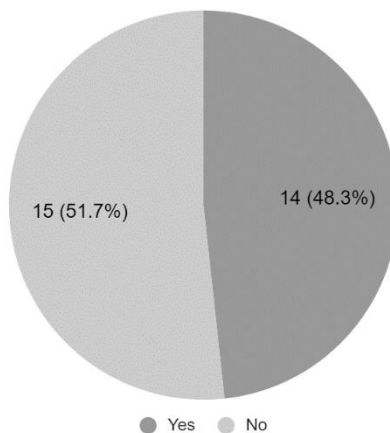

Q25. In what state is your organization located?

IV.   TRAINING AND MENTORING (10 QUESTIONS)

Q26. Do you currently have one or more trustworthy female mentors? (Includes peer-mentors)

15 (51.7%)   14 (48.3%)

● Yes   ● No

Q27. Do you currently have one or more female mentees whom you invest in regularly?

5 (17.2%)

24 (82.8%)

● Yes   ● No

Q28. When was the last time you met with one of your female mentees to specifically train or mentor her in ministerial leadership?

More than a year ago
11.1%

3 (11.1%)

Less than a week ago
29.6%

8 (29.6%)

13 (48.1%)

3 (11.1%)

Less than a month ago
48.1%

Less than six months ago
11.1%

Q29. When was the last time you shared leadership resources with your female mentee that address her passion and goals (e.g., books, seminars, training events, etc.)?

More than a year ago
7.4%

Less than a week ago
25.9%

Less than a month ago
48.1%

Less than six months ago
18.5%

2

7

13

5

Q30. How often do you "initiate" training or mentoring opportunities for female mentees?

Rarely
3.6%

Never
10.7%

Always
14.3%

Sometimes
21.4%

Often
50.0%

1

3

4

14

6

Q31. How often do you invite your female mentees to lunch (a casual meeting outside church) as you would with their male counterparts where informal mentoring occurs?

Often
11.1%

Sometimes
37.0%

Rarely
25.9%

Never
22.2%

Always
3.7%

3

7

10

6

1

Q32. How often do you hesitate to offer honest feedback to your female mentees to avoid hurting their feelings or affecting their confidence?

Rarely
29.6%

Sometimes
25.9%

8

7

Often
7.4%

2

10

Never
37.0%

Q33. When mentoring a female minister, which is the most preferred setting for you?

11 (39.3%)

16 (57.1%)

- One-to-some (inner circle)
- One-on-one
- Depends on the needs of my mentees

Q34. How do your female mentees typically schedule a meeting with you? (Select the best answer.)

6 (21.4%)

14 (50.0%)

8 (28.6%)

- Through my assistant
- Personal email
- Personal cell phone (text or call)

Q35. Do you feel the #MeToo or #ChurchToo movements influence your willingness to train and mentor women in ministry?

5 (17.9%)

23 (82.1%)

○ Yes ● No

V. EMPOWERING ANDADVOCATING (10 QUESTIONS)

Q36. How often do you publicly affirm the leadership calling of female ministers and advocate for them? (29 responses)

24 (82.8%)	5 (17.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1	2	3	4	5
Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Q37. How often do you invite your female mentees to social networking events outside work to intentionally introduce them to other influencers, mentors, or champions? (28 responses)

14 (50%)	9 (32.1%)	3 (10.7%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)
1	2	3	4	5
Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
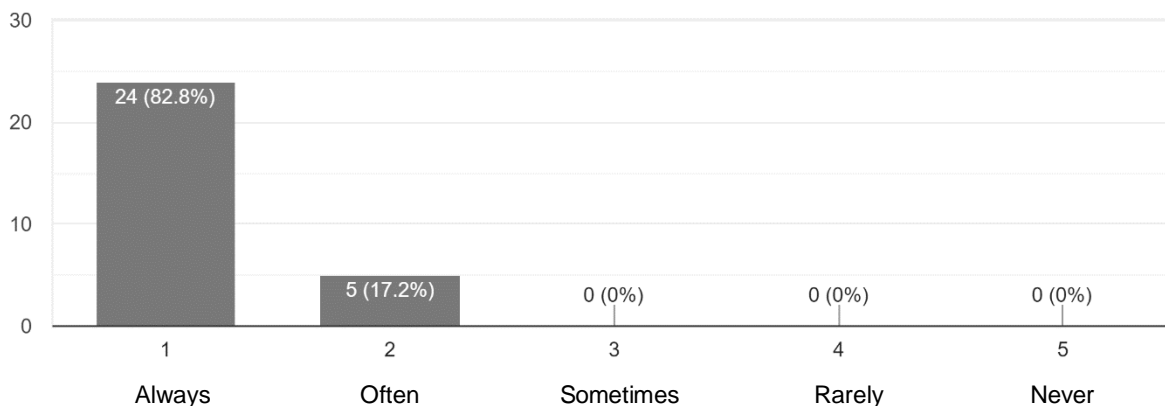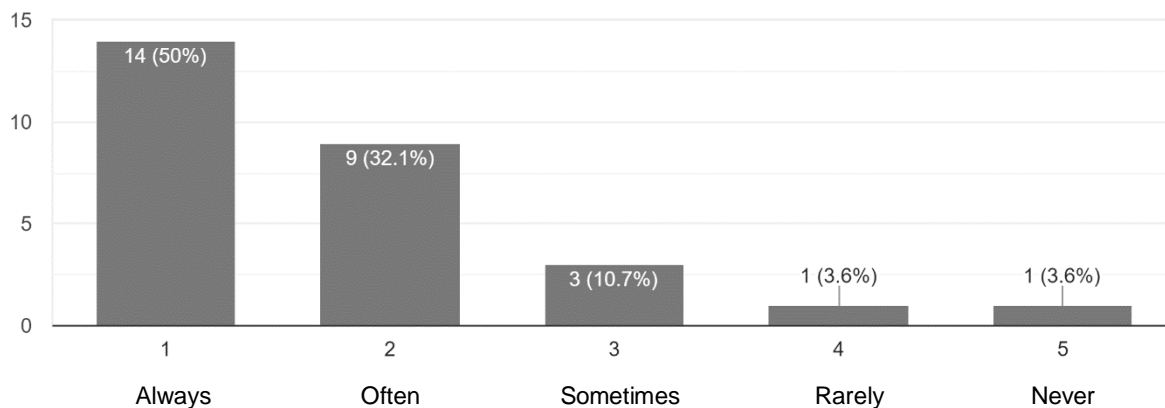
Q38. How often do you talk about your female mentees in their absence among other leaders for opening doors for them? (28 responses)
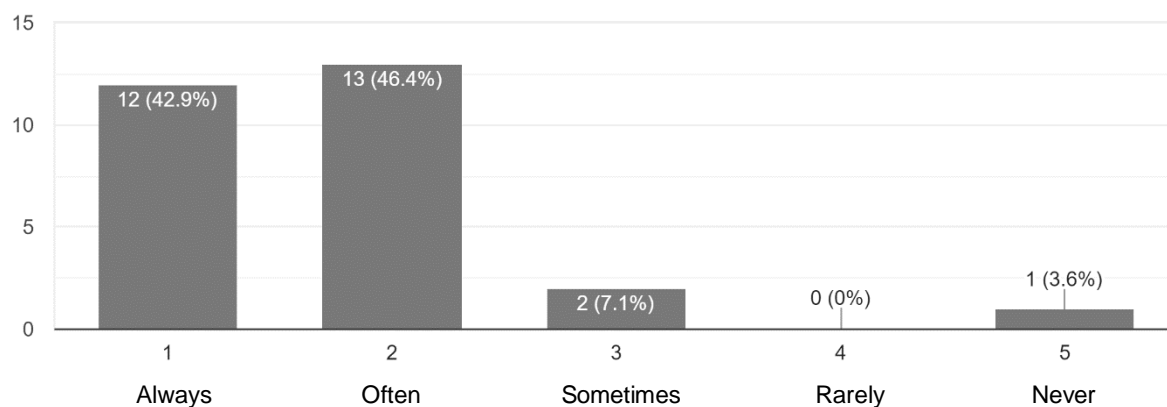
Q39. How often do you recommend the names of female ministers as keynote speakers when planning a church, district, or national event to normalize their visibility? (29 responses)
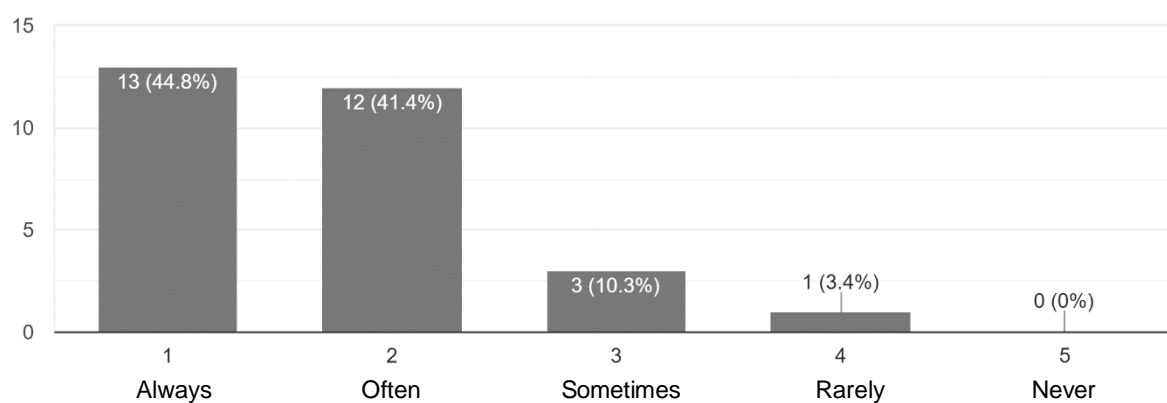
Q40. Have you personally empowered or advocated for female ministers by making a systemic or organizational change? (e.g., revising the bylaws, HR practices, or leadership pipeline)

Q41. How much do you agree with the following statement? Reforming the male-dominated leadership culture to become more gender-inclusive will empower women to lead throughout the different stages of womanhood (e.g., pregnancy).

Somewhat disagree
3.4%

Somewhat agree
27.6%

1

8

Strongly agree
48.3%

14

6

Agree
20.7%

Q42. How much do you agree with the following statement? Men should call out fellow male colleagues for making misogynist or gender-biased statements about female ministers.

Somewhat agree
13.8%

Agree
10.3%

4

3

22

Strongly agree
75.9%

Q43. How much do you agree with the following statement? Male and female ministers in the Assemblies of God are equally empowered and advocated by their mentors for leadership development, advancement, and opportunities.

Somewhat disagree
10.3%

Strongly agree
24.1%

3

7

Agree
20.7%

6

Strongly disagree
6.9%

2

11

Somewhat agree
37.9%

Q44. How much do you agree with the following statement? Gender-inclusive language, both written and verbal, is essential to empowering, advocating, and normalizing female leadership.

Somewhat disagree 3.4%
Agree 20.7%
1
6
13 — Somewhat agree 44.8%
9
Strongly agree 31.0%

Q45. How much do you agree with the following statement? Gender-inclusive language, both written and verbal, is essential to empowering, advocating, and normalizing female leadership.

Strongly disagree 3.4%
Somewhat disagree 6.9%
Somewhat agree 20.7%
1
2
6
15 — Strongly agree 51.7%
5
Agree 17.2%

VI.   OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS (5 QUESTIONS)

Q46. How can the AG reproduce and disciple more male champions like you?
(**27 responses**)

1) Model our stated beliefs about women in ministry leadership at every level down to the local church.
2) It is happening...
3) Have women leaders in our movement have candid conversations about the challenges they face and maybe some of the inadvertent ways we are not supporting their call to ministry. We may be discouraging the call of God among the ones He is raising up in our leadership.
4) Having women in clear leadership roles and having them as keynote speakers at district functions as well as national functions can aid in this.

5) 1. GET OUT ON THE FIELD: Each year I do one 30-35-day tour of each region in my Network and visit every church in person to meet their staff, get a tour of their facility and pray with them on their own turf. I have met many outstanding female leaders that we either did not know about or did not provide/broker a way for them to use their giftings.

2. LEADERSHIP INTEGRATION. Seek out qualified female leaders and get them into your leadership pipeline where they are gifted, qualified and proven. We have had success in this area …

> • appointing qualified females to leadership position.

> • addition of five female mental health professionals to the network Credentials Committee

> • Let the system select them. Two females have been duly elected the presbytery. One elected as a sectional presbyter and the other elected to the executive presbyter. Amazingly that representation is the exact same percentage of females on our Network ministers' roster.

> • I personally do not subscribe to legislative apportionment where policy or bylaws mandate a certain number of women. I think doing such 1. Undermines females, 2 creates resentment and 3. Sets a precedent that makes an exit plan nearly impossible once goals are met. I would rather use other organic methods that enables female leaders to rise to leadership on their own merits while using my influence as a Superintendent to strategically match gifted and proven female leaders with win/win opportunities. All our female representation has been organic and currently our female leadership represents the exact percentage of their demographic without legislative mandates. I think it undermines the value of female leaders,

3. MENTORING AND LEADERSHIP PIPELINE: We had two females go through our 15-week training cohort to prepare our ministers for their first lead pastorate in 2021 and seven more are signed up for 2022 cohort.

4. AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

> • Giving them exposure by including them in public events and key committees.

> • We created an eBook to promote female credential advancement entitled, Preparing for Ordination. Educational Options for Busy Ladies. It can be viewed at http://www.agspe.org/20210904_FemaleOrdination.pdf

> • We also created a national collaborative effort in which other District Superintendents worked together to create a list of things they can to do

encourage female leadership as well as a resource that helps local pastoral search committees process the issues around female leadership.

http://www.agspe.org/20210912_FLP.pdf

• We added a new chapter to our Network's pastoral transition resource to help local search committees consider the possibility of female candidates for the office of lead pastor

6) Continue to mentor and support our female credential holders. Their success and example will make a difference.
7) The most effective way is for male champions to intentionally "produce" them
8) Educate and help people identify their bias that they may not even be aware of.
9) Vocal leadership
10) By making it part of the DNA of the AG by adding inclusive language in our fundamental truths and theological positions. When opportunities arise for leadership look for qualified female leaders to fulfill positions so our leadership properly reflects our beliefs of women in ministry.
11) Continue to equip and encourage District Leaders
12) Educate the theology of women in all facets of life and vocation starting at the earliest of age.
13) Provide teaching at an early age in the local church about female leadership examples and sound theology.
14) Organically among men. Gender inclusivity and prioritization of national/district training and leadership development curricula/seminars.
15) It's a process. For me it started when I was young and how I was raised. As far as me being a "champion," I have a lot to learn and may need to change. I've been hesitant to be in a mentor/mentee relationship with women; although, I've heard women call me their mentor. And I've never been in the position of being mentored by a woman. In the AG's it should begin with our pastors and how they lead their churches, lived out in our AG Universities, taught in our ministerial training, and modeled at the NLRC.
16) Continue to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit when making decisions regarding leadership
17) I don't know.
18) Making women in ministry and leadership a more discussed topic. Maybe one of the FT.
19) Normalize the conversation and allow for discussion on the subject.
20) The encouragement, promotion of, and intentional advocacy must come from the top national, district, and lead pastoral levels.
21) Must begin at District & Sectional levels where most of our new ministers are coming from - local churches rather than universities...
22) Intentional involvement in district/national events where they rub shoulders with others.
23) Initiative and awareness

24) Keep the communication front and center regarding women in ministry.
25) Be encouraged by leaders at every level to include women; to see women appointed to positions where Network leaders can choose who to appoint; to see women recognized for outstanding leadership at equal numbers to male recognition.
26) Advocate for women in ministry
27) Underscore this value with good theology. Address blind areas head on.

Q47. What do male ministers need to know to equally train, empower, affirm/advocate, and mentor female ministers called to higher leadership?
(28 responses)

1) That they will be left behind as women become more and more empowered and greater in number and influence.
2) it is important and Biblical
3) We need to be intentional on elevating the call of women in ministry, in all areas of ministry. Some women pastors have stated to me that they had a call to pastor but never saw that modeled in the churches we represent. We need to affirm and show that women have this calling and are successfully navigating the call God has placed on their lives.
4) If a church congregation is fully on board with having female ministers on staff, they must also be on board with male pastors and female pastors interacting with one another And being mentored by each other. It seems like many times we want to have both male and female pastors on staff, but we want to have them separated when it comes to leadership and training.
5) Invest in the right women. I have found that in the past 20 years some of the commonly "accepted" female leaders were part of the "good ole boy" club or wives or daughters of existing male leaders. I discovered many female leaders who were not known or given opportunities for no other reason than they were not knows. Our system leaned on the same 6-8 ladies for a decade without knowing or including others who had the same or greater potential. I personally look for female leaders with the following qualities.
1. History of faithfulness. They have results and not just rhetoric backing them up.

2. Driven by a calling not a cause. They are over the female thing and into the leadership thing.

3. Successful followership. As strange as it may sound, the best leaders are those who have been successful followers in prior seasons of their development. They can follow and lead at the same time.

4. Proven results. Unfortunately, we live in a day when optics are valued more than results. But I look for female leaders who have built, developed, and actually grew things that were entrusted to them.

5, Divine gifting. Let's face it we have all seen the difference between a person with natural talent and another with supernatural anointing.

Leaders are busy and our time is not only like gold but must be reserved for the most worthy mentees.

6) They need to strive to understand the areas that cause stress and concern and learn to deal and understand how to embrace female leadership.
7) We need to remind ourselves that our female colleagues are image-bearers of God, just as much as we are
8) Treat people the way you would your brother/sister
9) Women are equal / confused by question
10) They need to know Jesus.
11) This should be considered normative, and they should not underestimate the power of their advocacy and voice. They should also appreciate with conviction the value of female leadership in terms of wisdom, perspective, skill, and relational abilities.
12) Welcome women into leadership development as genderless as possible. In other words, based on gifts, abilities, and character.
13) Focus on qualified personnel before gender considerations.
14) Local church pastors exemplify within their organization, and publicly promote women in leadership. Write articles, teach in sermons, offer theological framework for women in leadership.
15) That God has called women who have strengths and unique gifts that the church and organizations need to have a positive influence, impact, and success.
16) God sees no difference in gender when it comes to leadership roles
17) They need to acknowledge God calls men and women to all roles.
18) Not being insecure is critical.
19) Be more aware that there is a need and opportunity to do so.
20) That women are as equally called as men, and that a place at the leadership table needs to be opened to them.
21) We are part of an historic systemic arrangement of male privilege that's comfortable and secure enough we don't even think about leveling the equity playing field for women.
22) Trust/integrity with strong ministerial ethics
23) Every has giftings which complement the body
24) Gender bias is often subconscious. Keen awareness to male promotion of female qualified counterparts is essential.
25) That Gods call is to an individual
26) That those in higher positions of leadership have a higher responsibility to facilitate the change in intentionally raising up strong women leaders.
27) God's calling is equally important for male and female.
28) Galatians 3:28

Q48. What do "female ministers" need to understand about men as they lead side-by-side with their male colleagues?
(27 responses)

1) Change is difficult.
2) It takes time and education to undo years of bad teaching
3) I think some men know academically that there are challenges to women in ministry. Male ministers don't feel the extra challenges that many women face. Please don't assume the worst of your peers. Take time to get to know them and express the concerns that you have. We are all intending to build God's kingdom together.
4) As much as we want to deny this, the fact is the male brain is wired differently than a female brain when it comes to sexual desire. Men are more prone to sexual thoughts than a female.
5) I am turned off by any leader (male or female) who has something to prove or a motivation driven by activism. I can't speak for all men, but I am turned off by leaders male or female who desire influence that is not authenticated by effectiveness, results and team skills. I think some female leaders who are this way do more harm than they do good.
6) There are some who don't or will never get it. There are many that want to understand and need help moving the goal posts.
7) I am honestly not sure. The female leaders I know are already so intuitive about things, they probably already know what they need to.
8) It's ok to initiate the conversation.
9) Men are equal / Confused by question
10) They have a voice and their voice matters.
11) Men can be a little shy and uncertain around females in the present climate. They also do not do well when they feel pushed or when they feel they are being used to advance an agenda.
12) Men are sexual beings. Very much visually stimulated. Be careful of words in particular. Proverbs makes it clear men are often drawn to the words of women who make them feel significant with their words.
13) Men are visually oriented. Modesty practiced by both genders. Be careful, for the choice of words. Words spoken that create significant can be misread by men. See Proverbs.
14) Be their authentic self, confident in their calling,
15) They don't like to be challenged. They are intimidated by aggressive women. Some of them are afraid due to the current PC movement's and environment that we live.
16) We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and stand equal before God
17) Many men don't know how to champion women, bc of culture of male only leadership.
18) Even the best men, still are not women and may unintentionally communicate things they are not meaning to.

19) That some men will welcome them, and some men are still stitch in hierarchy thinking. Embrace the former and ignore the latter.

20) For the most part, we are collectively idiots with little training in appropriate sharing of true leadership with women - even when our intentions are good, we can't help falling over ourselves... with women.

21) Equally called by God

22) More men are inclusive than female ministers realize.

23) Most of us (men) are clueless and have good intentions. Cut us some slack. Train us.

24) That a mutual respect is a great part of the success for both, we are a team.

25) Not to be intimidated and to graciously call out inappropriate comments or male dominated behavior.

26) Understand God has designated them uniquely with gifts and personal makeup to serve God effectively.

27) Both genders are essential to Heaven on earth ministry. Thy Kingdom come…

Q49. How do you practice ethical cross-gender mentorship while honoring each other's integrity, purity, credibility, and reputation?
(27 responses)

1) Communication with spouses and agreed upon boundaries in all situations.

2) My wife also is an ordained minister. Having here with me in moments of mentoring is the best way for me to connect. There is a challenge of having that one on one with women. I never want to jeopardize their or my reputation.

3) For the sake of people who may question anyone's motives, I try to make sure I am never found alone with a female leader. Even if that's simply meeting in a place where other people are or Simply keep both of us above reproach.

4) common sense, spiritual discernment, and self-awareness.

5) Carefully

6) Nothing can be a secret about meetings or phone calls. My wife always needs to know in advance (when possible) and be given a "debriefing" afterward. The same would be true of the spouse of a mentee. Secrets breed insecurity.

7) Public places are so easy to meet.

8) Typically, I have followed the Billy Graham principles, albeit I know that's also not a popular response.

9) Treat them like a human being.

10) I do not engage in 1-on-1 lunches or social settings without my wife knowing and consenting. Otherwise, I conduct 1-on-1 meetings in workplace settings as well as small group settings. I regularly recognize and validate publicly the work of female pastors on our team.

11) I practice the Billy Graham rule without apology. I have done this for 40 years. Have windows on office doors. Avoid every appearance of impropriety.
12) Meet by Zoom. Meet in room with a window that the public may see through. The Billy Graham Rule.
13) Same as men, and aware of what might be misconstrued and ensure integrity and reputation are sustained.
14) That's the big question. Most of the men I know, leave it up to another woman.
15) Always remain visible to co-workers
16) I meet with small groups of ppl.
17) Use wisdom. Transparency. and communicate with spouse
18) Be wise, set clear boundaries, set clear goals for mentorship.
19) Don't cross any lines that protect the professional relationship.
20) Being appropriate, respectful, and honoring
21) Ministerial ethics
22) Every is given the same respect regardless of gender
23) I have open windows in my office doors. I treat women equally as men. Integrity of heart has nothing to do with gender. It goes both ways.
24) By keeping the focus Biblically based.
25) Carefully! Usually with at least on other person present when in person meetings take place; informing staff and/or spouse when online mentoring is scheduled and in debrief afterward.
26) Honor and respect individuality
27) Do so in the light.

Q50. Any other final thoughts or wisdom on male allyship for female ministers? (16 responses)

1) There exists a need to pushback misogynistic thinking and behaviors as inappropriate, and to continue to teach and remind younger male ministers (the builders and boomers era of influence is nearly over) that Reformed Theology and complementarian positions are not in alignment with our stated doctrinal beliefs.
2) We have to have prepare our Biblical defense for women in ministry to answer those who feel like it is something apart from orthodoxy. The bible is clear about the service and call of women. We also need to recognize the pastoral call. A women in ministry with credentials is Pastor, like any man with the same credentials would have the same title. Recognize the call of God, the gifting, and the office that women have been called to serve.
3) God did make men and women differently. That's why we have female and male bathrooms, female and male clothing. In the same way, it is good that we are different because we can learn from each other. We also have to understand because we are

different, there are certain things that we need to guard ourselves from in order to keep ourselves holy and pure. But when it comes to leadership, there is no denying that women can lead and be in leadership rules. Finding a balance on how to interact with male and females together is a difficult obstacle that can be overcome with wisdom and integrity.

4) I personally do not subscribe to legislative apportionment where policy or bylaws mandate a certain number of women. I think doing such 1. Undermines females, 2 creates resentment and 3. Sets a precedent that makes an exit plan nearly impossible once goals are met. I would rather use other organic methods that enables female leaders to rise to leadership on their own merits while using my influence as a Superintendent to strategically match gifted and proven female leaders with win/win opportunities. All our female representation has been organic and currently our female leadership represents the exact percentage of their demographic without legislative mandates. I think apportionment undermines the value of female leaders, paints them into a box and creates a situation where an exit strategy, once you establish acceptable representation, is impossible to achieve and ends up hurting another new minority.

5) I am certainly no expert on the subject, but I will say that I am thankful for the opportunities I have been given to advocate for female leaders, and I pray that I have many more chances to do so in the future.

6) Lead on

7) I don't have the answer to this, but we have lost two wonderful female pastors from our team in the last few months because of spousal job relocations out of town. We are about to lose another. I find it frustrating trying to keep strong female pastors for the long term given family issues. I have seen more longevity with single females.

8) Let's further the Kingdom together on the same par.

9) No

10) When a leader is married, she/he should be in agreement about the practice ethical cross-gender mentorship.

11) Remain sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and be willing to say yes to opportunities of ministry.

12) We want to try to fit in with other evangelicals too much. many of them are complementation. we need better egalitarian theologians.

13) Let the church not keep half or more of its human God-called resources on the bench!

14) ?

15) We now have 25% of our credential holders in KY who are female. Lead on, ladies. Let's reach the world for Christ.

16) Stay intentional.

APPENDIX C

CONTEXTUALIZED BILLY GRAHAM RULE[1]

Rocky Mountain Ministry Network

BGR 2.0: Contextualizing the Billy Graham Rule for Cross-gender Ministry Teams

Curated by Gene Roncone (February 2022)[2]

In 1948, Billy Graham and a few other prominent evangelical leaders met in Modesto, California, to discuss ways their traveling ministry could avoid the pitfalls of moral impropriety.[3] The Modesto Manifesto or the Billy Graham Rule (BGR) was one of the outcomes of that meeting. BGR has since become an extrabiblical Christian practice among many evangelical Protestant men by which they avoid spending time alone with females to whom they are not married. It was adopted as a display of integrity and means to avoid sexual temptation, the appearance of doing something considered morally objectionable, or being accused of sexual harassment or assault.

Although wise in its time and appropriate for a traveling ministry, the rule is not supported by scripture, always achievable, or relevant in our current ministry context. The challenge is that over seven decades have passed since 1948 when the Modesto Manifesto was written. Since that time, many God-called and Spirit-empowered females have been credentialed and are faithfully serving as General Council executives, regional leaders, district/network officers, executive presbyters, sectional presbyters, lead pastors, and associate pastors in our local churches. We are

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[1] Used with permission. The researcher collaborated with the team in creating this resource for local church ministers or ministry leaders. The curator quoted the researcher in this document.

[2] This collaborative project began January 24, 2022 with an invitation to male and female scholars, ministers, associate pastors, lead pastors, co-pastor teams, executive leaders, presbyters, and licensed counselors associated with the Network asking for their input. Contributors were requested to reply within two weeks on how they would update the Modesto Manifesto to be relevant today in the areas of pastoral counseling, ridesharing/transportation, meetings with staff, and interaction with district/network and national leaders of a different gender when discussing details resulting from an investigation into the moral failure of a minister. Thirty leaders chose to participate in this collaborative project by providing feedback. Gene Roncone then began summarizing those observations, identifying common denominators, and even identifying differences of opinions. A draft document was then sent back to the participants for final review and comments before review by the Executive Presbytery and recommendation to the Network Presbytery. The document was discussed, reviewed, and unanimously recommend by the Executive Presbytery to the Network Presbytery on February 23, 2022 for consideration and discussion by our Network ministers and churches.

[3] Billy Graham Rule (May 2021), Retrieved January 26, 2022, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Graham_rule.

now faced with a need to update the rule to successfully accommodate the increase of women in ministry as well as acknowledge the expanding reality of same-sex attraction within our culture.[4]

The question is how do we preserve the wisdom of BGR without marginalizing ministry leaders, overcomplicating administration, neglecting cross-gender mentoring, and diminishing accountability. Even Jesus was willing to wrestle with this tension in His own interaction with women and contextualize His own society's version of the Billy Graham Rule. In John 4:7-30, He breached societal boundaries and the rules of His culture by intentionally talking to a Samaritan woman in private during the least trafficked time of the day. He knew the Jewish law forbade Him from talking to a Gentile—let alone a woman with a complicated past with men. However, Jesus cared more about her soul than adhering to a law that diminished her intrinsic value as God's image bearer.[5] Matthew 27:55-56, Mark 15:40-41 and Luke 8:1–3 also mention women who were part of Jesus' inner circle of disciples and even traveled with His team to different ministry locations.[6] As much-needed female leaders join our ministry teams, we must navigate these situations with the wisdom and discernment of Christ.

The purpose of BGR was twofold: First, to avoid settings where temptation and opportunity to sin might be more likely; and second, to preserve the integrity, testimony, and reputation of an individual by avoiding the appearance or accusation of impropriety, even if none existed. BGR was also wise in foreseeing that a false accusation can be as damaging to a person's credibility as if it had actually occurred.[7] To honor the spirit of BGR, I assembled a team of male and female licensed counselors, scholars on this subject, sharp RMMN pastoral thinkers, and our Network Presbytery to make recommendations on how the Modesto Manifesto might be contextualized.[8]

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[4] In addition to these reasons there are other factors to consider when attempting to apply the BGR to today's ministry context. (1) The BGR was written over 70 years ago and is from a different era. During this time, men and women did not work shoulder to shoulder in ministry leadership as they do now. (2) The BGR was the product of a group of ministers who held a complementarian (the belief that the Bible prohibits women from serving in ministerial leadership positions), not an egalitarian, theology of women. Therefore, the women in their context were most likely hotel employees, secretaries, waitresses, and nurses — not ministry colleagues. (3) BGR was written by a traveling evangelistic ministry that required their team to travel for extended periods of time and be isolated from the accountability structures of their normal lives. (4) Pastoral ministry in the local church involves more cross gender interaction between staff and volunteers than a traveling ministry.

[5] Saehee Duran, "The Billy Graham Rule in the Leadership Development Context," March 10, 2021, Southwestern University, DMIN 8143: Culture, Context, and Mission, student paper.

[6] Charlie Self, Ph.D. (RMMN minister, ministerial educator, and consultant), February 5, 2022, email.

[7]Alex Lucero (RMMN Assistant Superintendent), February 5, 2022, email.

[8] Superintendent Gene Roncone assembled a team of certified Christian counselors, a female scholar on this subject, and sharp RMMN pastoral thinkers to make recommendations on how the Modesto Manifesto might be contextualized. Listed in alphabetical order, those who participated were: **Juanita Blevins** (Associate Pastor, Praise Church, Pueblo, Colorado), **Linda Bottoms** (RMMN Assistant Director of Church Ministries), **Brandon Bradford** (Certified Professional Life Coach, Ranch of Hope), **Mariah Bradford** (Counselor and Intervention Specialist, Ranch of Hope), **Yolanda Brown** LPC (RMMN Credential Team and Licensed Professional Counselor), **Jim Brummett** (RMMN Network Presbyter), **John Bryant** (RMMN Network Secretary/Treasurer), **Troy Champ** (Lead Pastor, Capital Church, Salt Lake City, Utah), **Steve Chavez** (RMMN East Slope Executive Presbyter), **Josh Cook and Sara Jane Cook**, (Co-Pastors, Victory Life Church, Fruita, Colorado), **Saehee Duran**, DMin (Lead Pastor,

Those recommendations are summarized in the form of a one-sentence statement, situational applications, concluding thoughts, and discussion questions for clarifying conversations that follow.

1. Modesto Manifesto (BGR) Contextualized

Ministers are strongly encouraged to avoid spending unwise amounts of personal (nonprofession-related) time in private, nonpublic, nonprofessional settings with a member of the opposite gender to whom they are not married.[9]

2. Situational Applications

Views concerning the application of a principle are usually more diverse than agreement with the principle itself.[10] Consequently, in the interest of practicality, the Presbytery suggests our RMMN ministers consider the following applications of the contextualized version of the Modesto Manifesto mentioned above.

- **Pastoral counseling.** Ministry leaders are often called upon to give biblical advice and counseling regarding marital problems. Should this occur with a member of the opposite gender, we recommend pastors consider limiting counseling to 2-3 sessions before referring them to a professional therapist in the event more counseling is needed. At a minimum, it is advised that counseling take place in offices with door windows or a clear line of sight to those outside the room. Environments with higher accountability are preferred.

Life360 Intercultural Church, Springfield, Missouri; and National Training Coordinator, Network of Women Ministers, The Assemblies of God U.S.A.), **Lewis and Heidi Franco** (Associate Pastors, Abundant Life AG, Salt Lake City, Utah), **John Gowins**, PhD (Eagles Nest Retreat Ministries), **Todd and Kelly Hudnall** (Co-Pastors, Radiant Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado), **Daran Lemon** (RMMN Utah Chi Alpha Director), **Noreen Lemon** (RMMN Network Presbyter), **Alex Lucero**, (RMMN Assistant Superintendent), **Glenn Lutjens**, MA LMFT (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist), **Chris Peterson** (RMMN Network Presbyter), **Jared Pingleton**, PsyD (Director, Mental Health Care and Ministry of the American Association of Christian Counselors), **Kelly Preston** (RMMN Utah Executive Presbyter), **Shawn Reine** (RMMN Director of Church Ministries), **Rob Rocca** (RMMN Presbyter), **Gene Roncone** (RMMN Network Superintendent), **Tim Sanford** MA, LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor), **Dr. Charlie Self**, Ph.D. (RMMN Minister and Ministerial Educator), and **George Stahnke** (Renewal Ministries of Colorado Springs).

[9] Original summary provided by Tim Sanford, MA LPC (Clinical Director of Counseling Services) and revised by collaborative feedback.

[10] One of the interesting observations resulting from this collaborative project was the diverse feedback from our female contributors. While all felt that BGR needs to be contextualized, females involved in local church ministry were more comfortable navigating the relational gray areas of contextualization; however, females serving as certified counselors seemed more committed to embracing clear and professional boundaries. It appears those who deal with the tragic consequences of moral failure possess a stronger sense of caution when it comes to prevention.

- **Transportation.** It is common for ministry teams to rideshare to or from meeting destinations. We recommend that ridesharing with members of the opposite gender be limited to short commutes of under two hours and that participants maintain a sense of accountability by communicating with their spouse or lead pastor beforehand.[11] It is recommended that longer commutes that would require two members of different genders and extensive travel include other passengers or a second vehicle.
- **Local church staff interaction.** It is also common for lead pastors, whether male or female, to need to meet alone with staff members, executive team members, or parishioners of the opposite gender to discuss confidential or administrative matters. We recommend that one-on-one meetings with staff members of the opposite gender be no longer than 2-3 hours and take place in a public setting or in offices with door windows or a clear line of sight to those outside the room.
- **District/Network deliberations concerning moral failure.** The facts from investigations into the moral and sexual misconduct of ministers must be presented to the network's Executive or full Presbytery for final decisions regarding a potential rehabilitation or termination of a minister's credential. The details and depth of sexual behavior often need to be discussed to determine what level of infraction occurred and what outcome the network may recommend. When these meetings involve both male and female leaders, it is advised that there be a minimum of three persons present with one gender represented by at least two appropriate members of the Presbytery or credential team.
- **National deliberation concerning moral failure.** Meetings and situational briefings between district/network and national leadership are at times required to seek advice from a member of the Executive Leadership Team concerning how to navigate a situation involving sexual accusations against a minister and the investigation thereof. The details of these situations often determine whether a minister may qualify for a restoration program with the Assemblies of God. When these meetings involve both male and female leaders, we recommend a minimum of three persons be present with one gender represented by at least two appropriate officials.

3. Concluding Thoughts

As our ministerial community becomes more diverse, it is important to remember that friendships and professional relationships can still be cultivated without the need to be "alone" in settings absent of accountability. The scriptures caution us saying, "Above all else,

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[11] Examples given by contributors of ways a minister can maintain accountability and avoid misleading conclusions were to text or call their spouses before and after an appointment or commute to inform them of the nature and length of the meeting/ride. If it were a long meeting, a minister could even post a positive statement on social media about the meeting and participant(s). An example of this was provided by contributor Saehee Duran and may consist of posting a picture with a caption such as, "Here at Starbucks with my fellow minister pastor, Saehee, sharing ministry joy and burdens together! Grateful for her leadership! Learning so much from this woman of God! #bettertogether #pastoralmeeting." Other recommendations included environmental considerations such as meeting in rooms without locks, rooms that are set apart for privacy but open and in view of others, or rooms near high traffic areas and even near security cameras that record video but not audio.

guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Proverbs 4:23 NIV). Following are a few ways to do that:

- **Heed the scriptures.** Moral purity does not require either gender to be viewed as an inferior source of temptation or vice to be avoided. As imperfect humanity, we are all capable of moral failure; therefore, humility requires scriptural admonitions to be prioritized over social trends or current political correctness. These clear and wise admonitions include overseers being above reproach, blameless, and not open to criticism (1 Timothy 3:2 ESV), setting an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (1 Timothy 4:12 ESV), and abstaining "from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV).

- **Involve your spouse.** If you are married, the best and easiest way to provide accountability is to include your spouse in an ongoing discussion and information loop. We suggest married ministers have clarifying conversations with their spouse about situations needing mutual accountability and that spouses be given veto power over any situation or relationship with which they may be uncomfortable.

- **Respect warning signs.** Do not be overconfident or minimize your weaknesses or vulnerabilities. Instead, be mindful of the disintegration of healthy relational boundaries through repeated meeting requests, texts, emails, app messaging, physical touch, attraction, sexual innuendos, inappropriate humor, and transparency about marriage disappointments (Genesis 4:7 NIV, Proverbs 6:27-28 NIV, 1 Peter 5:8 NIV).

- **Plan for accountability.** Although it may be logistically challenging at times, be intentional about proactively planning and staying out in front of unhealthy settings, spontaneous situations with low accountability or the appearance of questionable conduct. Without equivocation, we must abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV). Single ministers are encouraged to steward their liberty with proper discretion.

- **Follow your discernment.** It is important to note that the cultural realities of same-gender attraction now require us to expand our discernment beyond the traditional boundaries of gender.[12] Should your lead pastor, spouse, personal preferences, or sense of discernment call for stricter boundaries than these, we appeal to you to follow your heart and err on the side of caution.

The harvest is calling, and we must mobilize every asset the Lord has provided, including our sisters in the faith who share our divine gifting, calling, and empowerment (Matthew 9:37-38 ESV). In the words of one of our female counselors and member of the Network's credential team, "As we strive to give women more room to minister and wrestle with same-gender attraction, we will need to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves more than ever" (Matthew 10:16 NIV).[13] Therefore, let us also remember that prevention is always better and easier than a cure.

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[12] Daran Lemon, January 27, 2022, email; and Mariah Bradford, January 28, 2020, email.

[13] Yolanda Brown, LPC (RMMN Credential Team and Licensed Professional Counselor), January 26, 2022, email.

4. Clarifying Conversations

To facilitate meaningful thought and clarifying conversations about this topic as an individual and with your spouse, ministry team, and board, we have provided the following discussion questions.[14]

A. **Individual reflection for ministers.** A person's greatest strength should be knowing the parameters of their personal weaknesses. Reflect upon the following questions concerning your own self-awareness:
- What unique weaknesses or past vulnerabilities might the enemy use to disqualify you from ministry (1 Peter 5:8 NIV, Genesis 4:7 NIV)?
- What unique boundaries or accountability structures might you need to compensate for your response to the previous question?
- If married, what challenges/problems might you and your spouse have that need attention or resolution? What specific steps can you take to address them?
- If married, are you finding your heart being distracted or excited by anyone other than or more than your spouse? If so, what steps are you taking to bring it into the light?
- If married, how do you foster and discuss trustworthiness with your spouse in a healthy and balanced manner?

B. **Conversations with your spouse.**
- Are there any concerns about time spent in other relationships that the two of you should discuss?
- How would you be able to bring up related concerns in a healthy manner?
- What healthy boundaries can we both agree upon to preserve trust and safeguard our marriage.
- Are there any concerns or weaknesses in our marriage that the two of us need to focus on to minimize potential trust issues (1 Peter 5:8 NIV, Genesis 4:7 NIV)?
- How do we both continually invest in and strengthen our relationship by adding to our current marital foundation?

C. **Team discussions for church staff meetings.**
- How might the team better preserve their integrity and guard against unfounded accusations in this area?
- How might the team be sensitive to other team members who may prefer higher levels of accountability?
- How might the team foster an environment that encourages each person to support and challenge one another as it relates to matters of trust and accountability?

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[14]The list of discussion questions were the collaborative efforts of John Gowins, PhD (Eagles Nest Retreat Ministries), Glenn Lutjens, MA LMFT (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist), Shawn Reine (RMMN Director of Church Ministries), and Gene Roncone (RMMN Network Superintendent).

D. Board/Elder discussions for organizational impact points.
- What physical and environmental modifications might need to be made to assist your church staff in this area? Examples of environmental modifications might be installing video cameras, door windows, or a designated meeting room that has windows and video (but no audio) recordings to facilitate longer, private one-on-one meetings between staff members of the opposite gender.
- What expectations do you as a board have regarding matters of trustworthiness for your ministry team? What reasonable accountability structures might be implemented to carry out these expectations?
- What policies or procedures may need to be updated or implemented to embrace your own unique and contextualized version of BGR?

APPENDIX D

SEASON 3 NWM PODCAST "LEARN TOGETHER": EPISODE 3

Recording Date: 01/24/2022 at 10 am CST
Episode Launch Date: 03/22/2022
Topic: Championing Women *Practically*
Guests: District leaders (Gene Roncone, Rich Guerra)
Podcast link: www.womenministers.ag.org/podcast

Saehee's hook statement
Gene Roncone (Rocky Mt Ministry Network Sup) *Give a brief shoutout to your district AND share your other roles* Q1: Back in September 2021, you spearheaded a resource on female lead pastors to assist local churches to better understand the value of female lead pastors. More than 6,000 downloads in just eight weeks. AG supports women in ministry theologically, but our beliefs don't always match practices. **Tell us about the practical reasons AND benefits for considering women for lead pastors or any decision-making positions.** Q2: Change in leadership dynamics must take place from both ends: top leadership and aspiring leaders. **What are some things you've observed that are limiting the opportunities for called women to thrive?** (Consider talking about the intentional efforts for change at the district leadership level and the lack of ordained women for consideration)
Rich Guerra (SoCal Dist Sup and National EP) *Give a brief shoutout to your district and share your other roles.* Q1. Pastor Gene gave us the broader perspective on how to champion women in ministry. Now, let's talk about the details. It's critical for women entering a male-dominated leadership world to have some inside scoops so we can collaborate more effectively. **What are some things women do not know but need to know about the ministry leadership world? Any practical advice that can help women ministers to position themselves to be seen, heard, and accepted as full co-laborers in Christ?** Q2. As more women continue to join the leadership tables, we will have more opportunities to work, serve, and fellowship with diverse people groups, including the opposite sex. **What are some healthy boundaries or best practices for cross-gender mentoring in the context of leadership development?** (This is not about pastoring, but about mentoring and training people of the opposite sex)
Saehee and all guests: Each guest share "quotable leadership one-liner" as closing
Closing: Crystal Martin's leadership tips—recorded separately

APPENDIX E

SCRIPTS FOR NWM "BETTER TOGETHER" EPISODES 1-3

Better Together #1: Why Male Champions Matter

Opening Statement: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matt 9:37; Luke 10:2). Jesus spoke these words more than two thousand years ago, and they still ring true today. The question is, who are these workers that Jesus is referring to? The Assemblies of God believe that both men and women are equally called and anointed by the Holy Spirit for all levels of ministry. But are we also equally empowered and advanced in ministerial leadership?

Hi! I'm your host, Saehee Duran, and welcome to Better Together podcast, a place for honest and gracious conversations for all co-laborers in Christ! Whether you are a husband, a father, a mentor, or a ministry leader, your championing voice matters to women called to ministry. Thanks for making a difference!

Today, let's talk about why male champions matter for female ministers.

I. Why Male Champions Matter

First, 27 percent of the AG credentialed ministers are women, and they are serving in a male-centric leadership culture that's foreign to them. Women need courageous, countercultural, and intentional male leaders who will champion them in their ministerial journey. We need you!

Second, we need to model what we teach. While the AG has welcomed Spirit-empowered women to participate in God's mission since its founding in 1914, the roles of women in ministry had been limited, ambiguous, and fluctuating over the years. Of course, women ministers received voting rights at the 1920 General Council—the same year the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote in the United States. But the official recognition of their full equal rights to perform ministerial duties did not occur until the 1935 General Council. It's been nearly nine decades since then, yet there's still a dichotomy between the AG rhetoric and practice. It's about time for a change, and we can't do this without you!

Third, you have the power to make a difference! Most decision-making positions are occupied by men who have the power to make organizational, systemic, and cultural changes. According to the AG statistics, since the Network of Women Ministers launched in 1999 under Dr. George Wood's leadership, women ministers grew from 16 percent to 27 percent in two decades. Does it sound like nothing? Well, get this! Between 1977 and 1999 without intentional effort to invest in female ministers, that number only jumped from 15 percent to 16.2 percent. Today, fewer than 1 percent of all female ministers serve as executive leaders. So, who's in the strategic position to transform our Fellowship? We are, but male leaders are the key!

II. The Official AG Stance on Women in Ministry

In addition to the position paper on women in ministry, the AG articulates its supportive position for women ministers in our Constitution and Bylaws (Article VII Ministry, Section 2.l Eligibility of Women)

"The Scriptures plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word (Joel 2:29; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5). Women who meet the qualifications for ministerial credentials are eligible for whatever grade of credentials their qualifications warrant and have the right to administer the ordinances of the church and are eligible to serve in all levels of church ministry, and/or district and General Council leadership."

III. Two Contrasting Views on Women in Ministerial Leadership: Egalitarianism vs. Complementarianism

- **Egalitarianism** is a theological view that both men and women are equally called and equipped by God to do the work of the ministry at all leadership levels.

- **Complementarianism** is a theological view that only men are uniquely called and qualified to do the work of the ministry at the highest level of leadership. Women can hold secondary leadership positions as long as their teachings are limited to children and other women.

So, what's our position as the AG? Egalitarianism

A survey of AG female lead pastors concluded that male mentors, allies, or champions are the key to bridging the gap between the AG official stance on women in ministry and its praxis.

Another survey of AG female executive leaders from various ministry contexts highlighted the critical role of male leaders in increasing the visibility and influence of female ministers by reshaping the organizational leadership culture.

Since men occupy most of the top leadership in the AG, male ministers have the unique opportunities to make history by leveraging their positional influence to help advance called and qualified women to the next level of leadership. **That means you are part of the solution!**

IV. Source of Leadership

The Bible names various leaders from diverse backgrounds in different generations. They were political and spiritual leaders, Jewish and Gentile leaders, godly and sinful leaders, and male and female leaders. Despite the diversity in these leaders, Scripture clearly states that God ordains all human authorities, and He alone has the power to promote or demote human leaders according to His divine will and purpose (Num 27:16-17; Dan 2:21; Rom 13:1).

Consequently, leadership is a gift from God endowed upon anyone He chooses so that no one can boast about his or her authority.

V. Challenging Biblical Passages against Women in Ministry

1 Corinthians 14:34-35. In his letter to the church in Corinth, Paul wrote, "Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church." When read independently, this passage seems to restrict women from speaking publicly in all churches while promoting their silence and submission to men, especially their husbands. If this was Paul's position, it would severely contradict his teachings in other places in the NT where he supports and encourages women to utilize their spiritual gifts alongside men for the mutual edification of all believers.

1 Timothy 2:11-12. Paul wrote this letter to his spiritual son, Timothy, to offer pastoral counsel on how believers should respond to false teaching and conduct themselves in the Ephesian church. Chapter 2 specifically addresses the congregational tension caused by certain improper behaviors among believers—both men and women. Verses 11-12 focus on women's conduct in the church, and it reads: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet." However, egalitarian scholars argue that better rendering of verse 12 is: "I do not permit a woman *to teach with the intent to domineer over a man*." So, it's most likely that Paul's prohibition was against the specific circumstance, not a universal and timeless principle.

Now that we have dealt with some of the problematic passages against women in ministry, let's talk about the visible examples of female leaders and their male champions in the Bible.

VII.   The Old Testament

Deborah and her ally, Barak, a dependent political leader. Deborah was the only female judge out of the twelve. Judges 4 and 5 highlight her unique multi-roles as a minister, a wife, and a mom. By the time her name appeared in Judges 4:4, she was already leading as an established judge, and the Israelites had suffered twenty-year-long oppression under the Canaanites due to their disobedience and sin against the Lord.

Deborah's male ally was Barak, a dependent military commander from the northern region of Naphtali. The words dependence and military leader do not typically go together, but when Deborah charged Barak with God's command to conquer their enemy in chapter 4, he responded with complete dependence by asking her to accompany him to the battlefield. Relying on a Spirit-led, proven female leader did not make him less of a leader, nor did it make Deborah God's second choice. While Deborah's leadership was unusual, it was not out of order because God appointed her leadership. Their partnership led them to victory!

Huldah and her ally, Hilkiah, an intentional spiritual leader. 2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34 tell the story of Huldah, the wife of Shallum, the wardrobe keeper of Josiah, a God-fearing king. She was the only prophetess mentioned in the monarchical period. During the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple, the Book of the Law was discovered, which revealed some dark truth about the previous generation's sins against God. The king was deeply grieved and instructed Hilkiah, the high priest, to seek God's wisdom and guidance.

At that time, prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah were ministering actively in Judah. As a high priest, Hilkiah could have easily chosen one of these male prophets to assist King Josiah. Instead, he went to Huldah, the wife of a low-ranking temple official. The Bible does not explain the rationale behind this decision. But it seems clear that Huldah did not gain her leadership position through her marriage or a political campaign. Hilkiah was a countercultural male champion who purposefully invited an anointed woman to be part of God's redemptive plan.

The NT also records the stories of faithful women and their male champions. While women were not part of the twelve disciples, the prominence of the Jewish-male-centric leadership slowly decreased after Acts chapter 6 as Gentiles and women began to join the work of the ministry to meet the growing needs of the early churches.

Priscilla and her ally, Aquila, a supportive husband. As a powerful ministry couple, Priscilla and Aquila hosted Paul when he arrived in Corinth to preach the gospel. They both were tentmakers by trade like Paul and traveled together for ministry. In Acts 18, they met an educated Jewish man from Alexandria, named Apollos, teaching in a synagogue with much charisma. But when they realized his teaching was missing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they invited him to their home to help correct his theology.

During the Greco-Roman period, the increasing independence of women and their community involvement outside their homes were perceived as threats or problems to the Roman household. While many worshipped goddesses and some women even assisted with temple rituals, Greeks, Romans, and Jews held different opinions about the women's role in various contexts—although women's duties at home were highly regarded by all.

Aquila was familiar with all these different views, yet he still chose to minister alongside his wife. Not only that, but he also stepped back and watched the anointing of the Holy Spirit flow through his wife as she taught Apollos. He was a truly supportive and countercultural husband.

Junia and her ally, Paul, an empowering ministry colleague. Junia was a female apostle mentioned briefly in Paul's farewell message to the church of Rome. Despite the ongoing debates on Junia's gender since the 12th century, Paul stood out as a strong proponent of egalitarianism. He recognized the sacrificial ministry of Junia and honored her deep commitment to the apostolic ministry that matched the spiritual leadership level of male apostles. He championed her by recognizing her outstanding ministry and role as a spiritual leader.

But Junia was not the only woman Paul championed. Throughout his writings, he normalized women in ministry. He publicly recognized Phoebe as a deacon, Priscilla as his co-laborer in

Christ, and Junia as a fellow prisoner. He transformed the ministerial leadership culture by actively recruiting, teaching, and empowering women with ministry responsibilities.

While Paul certainly was an exceptional male champion during his time, he was not the most radical one.

Jesus, the affirming shepherd and ultimate champion. Jesus was the true countercultural male leader who championed women when they had no legal voice, dignity, or authority. As the affirming shepherd, He championed both Jewish and Gentile women against the patriarchal culture by inviting them to learn from Him alongside men and even commissioning them as disciple-makers.

How did Jesus champion women?

First, Jesus affirmed women by intentionally inviting them to be part of God's redemptive mission. Since He lived in the patriarchal culture, Jesus could have easily dismissed women or marginalized them from His ministry. Yet He intentionally traveled with them, taught them, and commissioned them for ministry.

Second, Jesus affirmed women by publicly acknowledging their faith and contributions while rebuking religious leaders, including His disciples. A great example is the story of Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anointed Jesus before His crucifixion. When the disciples saw what she did, they were irritated by the amount of money she wasted and questioned her action. But then, Jesus advocated for Mary by affirming her faithfulness and acknowledging her wisdom that was greater than that of His disciples.

Third, Jesus affirmed women by elevating their social status and dignity in a male-dominated culture. In Luke 10, Jesus is found at the home of two sisters, Mary and Martha, teaching His disciples. However, something seemed out of place. Mary was sitting among men to learn from Jesus, which was quite unusual since the typical homes during that time had separate areas for men and women. Understandably, Martha was not happy. But Jesus affirmed her place among His male disciples. He was a countercultural champion.

So, which male champion are you?

Are you a co-dependent influencer like Barak?
Are you a door-opener like Hilkiah?
Are you a supportive husband like Aquila?
Are you an empowering ministry colleague like Paul?
Or are you an affirming shepherd or pastor like Jesus?

Whichever you are, keep doing what you're doing because you're making a difference!

Thanks for tuning in! Until every man and woman fulfill their ministerial calling, let's remember: we are better together!

Better Together #2: What Male Allies Need to Know

Opening Statement: True or False?

1. Since its inception in 1914, the AG has welcomed dynamic and charismatic women to be part of Spirit-empowered ministry based on its theological conviction **(True)**
2. Initially, females were ordained as missionaries and evangelists without voting rights at the General Council since such was regarded as the role of elders, exclusively reserved for men **(True)**
3. In the early days, non-elder ordained women ministers could fulfill ministerial duties such as performing a wedding, funeral, baptism, or communion **(False; they could not)**
4. The official recognition of the female ministers' full ministerial rights took place in 1920, the same year the 19th Amendment was adopted, which granted women in the United States the right to vote. **(False; it wasn't until the 1935 General Council)**
5. The Task Force for Women in Ministry (now known as The Network of Women Ministers or NWM) was established in 1999 under Dr. George O. Wood **(True)**

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Today, let's talk about the things male allies need to know to better champion female ministers.

As a result, Dr. Wood's intentional allyship, the number of credentialed ministers grew by 54 percent between 1999 and 2017, the year of his retirement as general superintendent. Today, the NWM continues to train, support, collaborate with, and advocate for past, present, and future female ministers by helping them fully integrate into every level of ministerial leadership.

The number of female ministers continues to increase under the newly elected general superintendent, Doug Clay, who often publicly celebrates, normalizes, and champions female ministers. He grew up watching the spiritual leadership of his single mom, which greatly impacted his view on women in ministerial leadership. As a result, he appointed several female ministers to visible leadership platforms at local, district, and national levels. One of the notable female ministers he championed is Donna Barrett, the first elected female executive leader at the AG national office since 2018.

The intentional efforts of national leaders such as Dr. Wood and Superintendent Clay have significantly transformed the dynamics of ministerial leadership in the last decade, but the change has been much slower at the local level. For instance, according to 2020 AG statistics, women represented 1.9 percent of district officials, 9 percent of district executive presbytery, 6.7 percent of the sectional presbyters, and 5.8 percent of lead pastors. Despite these sobering numbers, the fact that competent women are serving in these influential roles is worth celebrating.

Despite the setback in the early 1920s and an apparent dissonance between its professed egalitarian theology and lived experiences of female ministers, the AG has been making strides toward empowering both men and women called to ministerial leadership, with the most notable changes occurring at the national level.

According to the study that surveyed fifteen female executive leaders at all levels in the AG, the results concluded that male mentors and advocates play a key role in helping women transition into higher leadership positions. The report also provided three critical changes necessary to transform the AG leadership culture:

    (1) Train male leaders to develop aspiring male allies or advocates by affirming the value of gender-inclusive leadership
    (2) Incorporate female ministers to visible speaking opportunities and decision-making tables
    (3) Update the bylaws to reflect gender-inclusive leadership and normalize cross-gender interactions in mentoring, training, and networking opportunities, which often result in a promotion or higher income

The strengths of the AG are its egalitarian position that supports women in ministry and training resources. The major setback is the gap between our theological conviction and practice. The greatest need is a group of courageous, countercultural, and intentional male champions who can help transform the organizational structure and leadership culture of the AG.

So, what are some things that our male allies or advocates must know so they can successfully champion female ministers?

First, let's talk about some of the myths about women in leadership.

Some of the challenges of gender-inclusive ministry stem from legitimate concerns that can threaten or question someone's integrity. However, unrealistic fear, concerns, or myths significantly decrease the value of mentoring people of the opposite sex in the leadership world.

Some of these myths include the following: women hinder the company's success, diversity training resolves the tension between men and women at work, men are naturally more qualified for higher leadership than women, women are not ambitious in their careers, and human sexuality prevents ethnical cross-gender mentorship.

Let's unpack that one by one.

Myth #1: Women hinder a company's success. A good analogy that defies such a myth comes from the story of Earl Tupper, the inventor of Tupperware during World War II, who unexpectedly discovered the importance of women's voice for his business success. Tupper initially worked as a contractor to make plastic parts for gas masks and jeeps. However, when the war ended, he nearly lost his job due to the lack of demand. Fortunately, his resilience and creative mind led him to experiment with a few things that finally landed in the creation of Tupperware. The consumers—mostly women—loved them at first, but they soon called perfectly good products defective and returned them to the stores.

Then came Brownie Wise who helped change the business model to exclusive home-party sales, which saved his business. Their success story demonstrates the importance of inviting female perspectives when making decisions for organizational success. Unlike the myth, women can positively impact their company's bottom line as they bring their unique perspectives and experiences to evaluate various challenges and offer creative solutions.

Myth #2: Diversity training resolves the tension between men and women at work. During the 1990s, diversity training focused mainly on engaging white men to include more women and ethnic minorities at work. Or course, pointing to white men as the cause of the leadership disparity had an adverse effect and didn't narrow the gap for women at work. Research shows that any diversity training that smells like legal compliance, targeting only the upper management, never works. However, the key to success is appealing to organizational success, mutual benefits, and increasing the awareness of gender disparity at work. Training that focuses on unconscious biases invites men and women to reflect on their own prejudices while working toward a common goal without finger-pointing. So, the assumption that diversity training can fix gender disparity at work is false.

Myth #3: Men are naturally more qualified for higher leadership than women. According to the 2015 Pew survey, most Americans view women "as superior to men when it came to leadership qualities like honesty, fairness, and compassion." Interestingly, the same study discovered that male leaders receive far more respect than their counterparts because of the subconsciously elevated status of men's qualifications. Such a perception, held by both men and women, forces women to perpetually prove their worth, knowledge, and abilities. Moreover, the stereotypes against female leaders constantly invalidate their leadership competency by scrutinizing their work more harshly than men's. Good leadership is about character, skills, knowledge, and experiences, not gender.

Myth #4: Women are not ambitious in their careers. Numerous studies concluded that even competent women hesitate to advocate for themselves, negotiate their salaries, or ask for promotions because society associates such forwardness or competitive spirit with "the providence of men." Their reluctance stems from the culturally conditioned upbringing that discourages girls from being competitive, assertive, and bold—and stay that way into adulthood. As a result, women struggle to find a balance between being confident and being liked. Contrary to the myth, a study conducted by Bain & Company reported that "43 percent of women aspired to top management early in their careers, versus 34 percent of men." Understanding the silent ambition of women can help male mentors be more intentional in their training, advocating, mentoring, and empowering female mentees.

Myth #5: Human sexuality prevents ethical cross-gender mentorship. This fear-driven myth ignores the purpose of gender-inclusive ministry and mentoring by reducing competent, high-capacity leaders into mere sexual beings. Intentional mentors and mentees conduct themselves with dignity and mutual respect and cooperatively establish healthy boundaries for successful outcomes. Those who effectively engage in non-sexual cross-gender mentorships view their sexuality as a sign of healthy human beings, use logic to avoid romantic encounters, and intentionally put each other's professional roles first before sexuality.

The number of women is increasing in almost all professions. But until top leadership reflects gender equity, male leaders are uniquely positioned to help women understand and thrive in that world. Courageous and confident men can debunk myths surrounding female leaders and cross-gender mentorship by focusing on the mutual wins for their mentees, organizations, and themselves. In a male-dominated leadership world, men remain a crucial key to empowering women called to lead.

Now that we've debunked five myths about women in leadership, let's briefly talk about the barriers to female leadership. What may be preventing them from advancing in leadership?

1. **Gender Biases**. Despite the growing number of female leaders, the contemporary leadership culture is still biased toward men. People often associate dominance, assertiveness, and competitiveness with men or managerial roles. Therefore, when women manifest these leadership characteristics that defy femininity or domestic image, it creates resistance. Gender biases—whether conscious, subconscious, or unconscious—negatively impact women's experiences related to the hiring process, leadership pipeline, promotions, income, leadership style, and training or mentoring opportunities.

2. **Invisible Hurdles.** These barriers are difficult to detect since they exist in the forms of a glass-ceiling, maze, broken rung, and gender-exclusive club. The invisible glass ceiling does not easily break by getting higher education or more job-related experiences and training. The invisible maze affirms women's ability to get to the leadership table independently, but it also indicates the messy and confusing process toward the top. A broken rung indicates the gap between the manager role and the entry-level position. Gender-exclusive club excludes women from various social settings, such as an informal meeting at a golf field or a lunch meeting.

3. **#MeToo or #ChurchToo Movements.** Various independent surveys unanimously concluded that these movements had an adverse effect on female leadership advancement. As a result, an increasing number of men expressed their discomfort or fear of working alone with a woman, and more companies have preferred to hire men than women to avoid potential sexual allegations. While such a politically charged movement can negatively impact the interactions between men and women at work, it is possible to reverse a gender-biased and fear-based organizational culture through intentional efforts by acknowledging positive examples of male-female professional relationships while urging men to step up even more as part of the solution.

4. **The Billy Graham Rule.** (Also known as "the Modesto Manifesto") Created in 1948 by Billy Graham and his three evangelical associates to uphold their morality and integrity during their ministry trips in response to some negative examples of their contemporary traveling ministers. They formed four core ideas to keep themselves accountable in the areas of financial abuse, sexual immorality, anti-church/anti-clergy attitude, and false publicity. However, over time, it was reduced to mean avoiding alone-time with any woman. As a result, collaborative efforts and mentoring opportunities for increasing female ministry leaders are hindered.

Now, the big question: How can we remove these barriers? Let's talk about that in the next video and be part of the solution because we are better together!

Better Together #3: Guys, We Have a Problem. Let's Fix It!

Opening Statement: Raise your hand if…

1. You are a man.
2. You are an ordained minister.
3. You are married.
4. You grew up seeing female leaders.
5. You are in your 50s or 60s.
6. You are a district/network leader or a local pastor.
7. You have a graduate or post-graduate degree.

Congratulations! You are the most likely man to champion female ministers!
(other factors): married to a wife who works/leads outside the home and have a daughter

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All the things I just mentioned are the common characteristics of male allies or advocates discovered in the anonymous survey I conducted for my doctoral study. Half of the participants were district leaders, a quarter represented local pastors, and the rest included educators, missionaries, a chaplain, a retiree, and a national leader.

I am excited to share with you some fascinating findings based on their responses. But first, let's pick up where we left off in the last video and with some proven practices that can help remove the barriers for women in leadership.

First, have a championing mindset. What is that exactly? Gender intelligence and restored siblinghood. In the past, many women entering a male-driven leadership world were advised to act like men to receive equal respect and acceptance. Unfortunately, such gender-exclusive language dismisses the value of different perspectives and experiences that can strengthen organizational health, efficiency, and productivity. A gender-intelligent organization views gender differences as strengths, not weaknesses or threats. Gender-intelligent leaders are aware of potential weaknesses or threats to cross-gender interactions, but they do not operate based on the fear of false accusation or compromising sexual integrity. Instead, they put an individual's calling and role first before gender.

John Ortberg, an author and pastor, shared three helpful ways to create a safe environment in which men and women can work together with mutual integrity, honesty, and honor without seeing each other as sexual beings: (1) The sibling test: When interacting with someone with the opposite gender, do I treat another person the same way I treat my sibling?, (2) the screen test: If my interaction with the opposite gender was displayed on a screen for the whole congregation to see, would I feel guilty or ashamed?, and (3) the secret test: Am I keeping secrets about this person of the opposite gender from others close to me such as a spouse?

Such an approach is helpful for re-contextualizing the BGR.

We talked about the championing mindset. Now, let's explore the championing method or strategy called the Gender-inclusive T.E.A.M.ing model.

Training—Empowering—Affirming/Advocating—Mentoring

Leadership development strategy #1, Training: Successful male champions know how to develop leaders by providing personalized training based on their individual professional needs and goals. This type of training focuses on sharing privileged information women cannot access due to gender barriers. Passing along the inside scoop such as "the organization's culture, its assumptions, traditions, and taboos" along with the insight on the potential "foes, competitors, allies, and neutral parties" will greatly assist women in their leadership journey.

Leadership development strategy #2, Empowering: According to Johnson and Smith, every man acts according to their unique "man script" that governs their interactions with others. If they have a healthy version of the man script, then their relationship with women will be healthy, authentic, transparent, empowering, and mutually edifying. However, unhealthy versions of the man script will fail to empower women by turning cross-gender mentorship into three damaging relationships: (1) father-daughter, (2) warrior/knight-maiden in distress, and (3) seducer-seductress. In the first category, a man can be an overbearing protector, undermining the competency and independence of female leaders as a result. The second category assumes that women are helpless without the chivalrous act of men, causing female leaders to withdraw by refusing to take action when necessary. The last category is the most dangerous of all as it alters the intent, the process, and the nature of gender-inclusive leadership into a sexual affair. While all male leaders can engage in some level of empowering endeavor, only a few male advocates or allies can tangibly influence the women's leadership pathway through "pay raises, high-profile assignments, and promotions." That's the difference between a mentor and a champion. Be the latter!

Leadership development strategy #3, Affirming/Advocating: Use words and actions to affirm or advocate for women ministers. Speak up for your female mentee or colleague when she can't, call out any gender-biased comments, recommend her name as a main speaker for the next big event, invite her to collaborate on new projects where she can bring her A-game, and share leadership responsibilities to stretch her leadership capacity. Sometimes, you may feel like you are out of your comfort zone, standing against your own cultural norm or people group. That's okay; even Jesus did that! But whatever you do, remember to be consistent in private and in public and be authentic with your words. Honest leadership feedback given in love is much better than fake compliments. Affective male champions don't hold back helpful feedback even if it may cost some tears.

Leadership development strategy #4: Mentoring: Healthy leaders engage in an ongoing life-giving mentor-mentee cycle. Unfortunately, since men occupy most of the top leadership and often practice the BGR, many aspiring women feel isolated, undervalued, and unsupported in their leadership journey, unlike their counterparts. If casual or informal cross-gender mentoring is not your thing, structured mentoring is another option. Based on my research, male ministers

prefer monthly meetings in small groups. When it comes to mentoring between men and women, we hear a lot of Don'ts. So, here's a life-giving short list of what you CAN DO: 1) have a clear goal, boundary, and role expectations to produce productive outcomes, 2) schedule meetings instead of impromptu hangouts, 3) meet in public, preferably at the same time and location, 4) inform others about the mentoring relationship to prevent gossip or false accusations. If you're married, keep it transparent to your spouse. What's there to hide, right? Effective mentoring takes two people equally committed and mutually edifying. So, stay committed!

Thus far, we've covered the T.E.A.M. in the acronym. What about the "-ing" part?

Understand that leadership development is a journey, not a one-time event. If you are a leader, developing leaders should be part of your job description. That's where the "-ing" suffix come in. Championing female ministers is an ongoing journey of learning, unlearning, and relearning until every woman can fulfill her ministerial calling.

As we wrap up, here are some helpful insights from some of the active male champions who participated in my survey. They were asked how we could reproduce more male allies or advocates. They said:

1. Teach egalitarian theology at an early age
2. Model egalitarian leadership in local churches
3. Hire or appoint competent women at all levels of church leadership
4. Increase the awareness of gender biases and blind spots through training/education and candid conversations
5. Model or advocate for visible female leadership at the top (e.g., local church, district/network, and national levels)
6. Train or equip male leaders to reproduce male champions

They were also asked how male leaders can champion female ministers. They said:

1. Male ministers must know that God's Word and heart affirm the gender-inclusive call to and Spirit-empowerment for ministry.
2. Male ministers must acknowledge the gender biases against female ministers and male privileges within the leadership culture.
3. Male ministers must recognize their divine call and responsibility to listen, learn, and lead with their advocating voice to facilitate change.
4. Male ministers must value women ministers not based on their gender but their proven results, skills, abilities, gifts, and character.
5. Male ministers must understand that there are both needs and opportunities for championing women called to ministry.

I pray that their words of wisdom and practical insight will empower you to be the best champions God created you to be! Thanks for listening and caring! Until every man and woman fulfill their ministerial call, let's always remember: We are better together!

Better Together #4: Walking the Talk (Men embodying egalitarianism in ministry)

Recording Date: 3/17/2022
Guests: Don Ross, Gene Roncone

Opening Statement: The study on the lived experiences of female ministers is conclusive: male leaders are the key to narrowing the gap between egalitarian theology and its praxis. In other words, since men mostly occupy top leadership, God has uniquely positioned them to cultivate a gender-inclusive leadership culture that mirrors His Word, mission, and heart. Then, how do successful male champions walk the talk? Let's learn from those that are doing it right!

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Introduce guests: Gene Roncone (Rocky Mt MinNet), Don Ross (NW MinNet)

Q1. Based on the survey results identified the common characteristics of a male champion, a likely male advocate or ally for women in ministry is *an ordained district leader or local pastor in the age groups 50s or 60s, who had an early exposure to female ministers and is married to a wife who leads outside the home*. **Do you fit that category? And do you think visible examples of female leaders in personal life influences how men normalize female leadership elsewhere?**

Q2. The survey outcomes also indicated that the best setting for cross-gender mentoring is *monthly small group meetings* in which both personal connection and accountability can co-exist for ongoing conversations and collaborations for developing or advancing quality leaders. But high-level leaders have busy schedules and can't mentor everyone. **How do you identify the right mentees? And how do you practically train or mentor women called to ministry in ways that are mutually edifying, honoring, and transparent?**

Q3. The AG has been supporting women since its inception in 1914. We credentialed women before they earned their right to vote in America in 1920. But there is a large gap between egalitarian theology (AG stance reflected both in our position paper and bylaws) and its practice. Some say we are not walking the talk. **How can we narrow this gap more efficiently? What practical advice do you have for both male and female ministers who struggle to fully embody the egalitarian ministry leadership?**

Q. Final thoughts or comments regarding gender-inclusive ministerial leadership or cross-gender mentoring.

Saehee: Book recommendations for men

Until every man and woman fulfill their ministerial call, let's remember: We are better together! (Link to Better Together podcasts: www.womenministers.ag.org/bettertogether)